

TANDEM METHOD FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

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An alternative way of mastering a foreign language is a tandem method, which involves reciprocal actions of two learners, speaking different languages, with the aim of mutual teaching. Participants assume different roles (a teacher/a learner) and dedicate half the time to each other [1].

Two forms of tandem learning can be differentiated: 1) face-to-face tandem, when learners meet in person and 2) e-tandem (or distance tandem), i.e. learning by e-mail, phone or other media.

Tandem learning can be organized by two (or more) individual learners or under the auspices of educational establishments. In the first case, learners are more independent, so their interest and ability level increases with the freedom to choose topics to be discussed, grammar constructions and vocabulary to be mastered. However, it takes some initial preparation (worksheets, textbooks, etc.) and self-responsibility of each learner. Language learning partners are also free to decide on the form of learning: it can vary from very formal (doing exercises, reading texts together, and assessing each other's essays) to very informal (doing sports together, chatting over coffee, etc.).

Partners can be found at educational establishments and on Internet which provides a wide range of tools, sites and apps allowing practicing tandem learning (e.g., <https://www.tandem.net/>).

The major advantages of the method are: 1) flexibility; 2) developing learners' autonomy; 3) an individual approach; 4) developing intercultural competence; 5) self-assessment; 6) increasing self-motivation; 7) near-real language environment; 8) lack of external supervision and assessment.

Generally, tandem partnership helps to prevent a sense of routine developing, boosts confidence, assures a better perception of the learning and teaching process, and contributes to destruction of language barriers.

Литература:

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