HSWT LANGUAGE TANDEM PROGRAMME (WEIHENSTEPHAN CAMPUS)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Two students with different native languages meet regularly to improve the knowledge of the other respective language in exchange with each other within the framework of the Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences Language Tandem programme. At the same time, the students are in contact with each other by means of electronic media such as e-mail, Instant Messenger or Skype.

A tandem partnership can constitute a useful addition to a language course, but also be used quite independently from this. The success crucially depends on your mutual commitment, since you are free to arrange the collaboration with your tandem partner.

REGISTRATION

You can send the completed and signed registration form per post or e-mail to the Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences International Office or hand it in personally there.

The International Office endeavours to provide all interested students with a suitable tandem partner. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that enough interested parties can be found for every language combination.

In case an arrangement is not immediately possible, we will regularly examine the entries in our database and if necessary enquire whether your application is still up to date.

CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT

During an initial joint meeting in the International Office you can get to know your tandem partner and obtain suggestions concerning arrangement of the language tandem.

Naturally, we will also not leave you alone after that, but continue to be available for consultations, for instance if the tandem falters and you require further assistance.

Of course, in return we are also grateful to you for feedback regarding which type of collaboration functions best in your tandem and how you can be mutually helpful to each other.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Project suggestions and task proposals are available in many languages for language learning in tandem:

» Ruhr-Universität Bochum database for supporting material with tandem learning (registration necessary)

On numerous other sites in the Internet you will also find materials which you can excellently include in your working in tandem. Among other things, a glance at the Language Centre’s self-learning offer is worthwhile.
TIPS FOR WORKING IN TANDEM

It goes without saying that language learning in tandem must be fun!

Moreover, we have compiled a few guidelines and tips for you so that it also leads to the desired success:

» During the initial meeting you should discuss what you expect from the collaboration with your tandem partner. Talk to each other about which purpose and to which extent you would like to improve your knowledge of foreign languages, whether specific subject areas particularly interest you and whether there are specific skills which you would particularly like to train (reading, listening, speaking and writing).

» If the meetings take place regularly, they can be integrated easier in the schedule. We advise you to get together at least once a week for a specified period so that you do not get rusty. Naturally the meetings can be prolonged at any time by mutual consent.

» Meetings can be held at a place of your choice. The only important thing is that a good working atmosphere prevails there. But we advise you to hold the initial meeting in a public site, for instance at the university or in a café.

» Roughly the same amount of time should be spent for both languages so that both tandem partners benefit equally. While doing so, it is up to you whether each meeting focusses on one language or half the time is expended for one and the other language. But the languages should be practiced separately from each other.

» Insofar as your foreign language is concerned, you determine yourself which topics and exercises are important to you. If it concerns learning your mother language, allow your partner to choose the learning method. It is best to discuss the topics beforehand in order to be able to work productively.

» By specifying learning objectives, for each meeting you can review how successful it was and whether there is a need for improvement. For instance, a learning objective can be to learn a specific number of new words or to confidently use grammatical structures.

» Prepare the meetings well. For instance, bring along books, magazines, music or a task from the course of studies to meetings. As a result, not only everyday communication situations can be practiced within the framework of the tandem programme, but you can also obtain tangible support, for instance with regard to writing texts or applications in the foreign language. Grammar and vocabulary can be trained with the help of textbooks or exercises from the Internet.

» Practice the pronunciation of unknown or complicated words together. Your tandem partner can also indicate in which cases your pronunciation sounds particularly “strange” to a native language ear.

» Calling attention to each other’s mistakes is an important tool for improvement of competence in the respective foreign language. Discus beforehand how corrections should occur. For instance, will mistakes be directly called to attention, or will feedback only occur after some time? Which mistake (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.) should your tandem partner particularly pay attention to?

» Therefore be prepared to make mistakes! Avoid always using only simple sentence constructions or known vocabulary, and deliberately take advantage of meetings to practice new grammatical structures and terms.