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## **International E-Tandems: A Tool for Increasing Student Motivation in the Foreign Language Classroom**

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### **Abstract**

This study presents findings from an online collaborative project involving students learning English at the University of Paris Nanterre (France) and students learning French at Cornell University (USA). Our main goal was to determine the impact of e-tandems on language learner motivation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly all courses at these two institutions were offered online, a move that greatly complicated the use of interactive group activities. This change represented a major threat to learner motivation and the development of communication skills in the target language. To counteract these effects, language teachers from the two universities organized an online e-tandem program; pairs of students composed of one American learner of French and one French learner of English had three virtual meetings to complete activities relevant to their studies. During these meetings, they were to alternate between speaking English and French. Following each exchange, students completed journal entries about their experience using the target language. Results indicated that the e-tandem program was a positive experience for students, with many reporting higher levels of intended learning effort and being able to see themselves as competent language users. These findings highlight the didactic potential of virtual exchanges.

*Keywords:* e-tandems, foreign language classrooms, languages for specific purposes, motivation, online exchange, speaking skills

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## Introduction

This study presents findings from an e-tandem project organized by language teachers from Cornell University (USA) and the University of Paris Nanterre (France). This program was implemented at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, during a period in which France was still in lockdown and American universities were struggling to stay open. Many university courses were forced online, with teachers often receiving minimal training. For many students, these online courses meant long hours of staring at a screen and listening to lectures, with additional written work and few opportunities to interact with their peers.

Such a situation had the potential to limit effective language learning and drastically reduce Language Learning Motivation (LLM). The interactive activities and collaborative tasks that are the hallmark of a good language course had all but disappeared. In online courses, the opportunities for authentic language use are greatly diminished. Distractions at home, internet connection issues, and difficulties engaging in conversations virtually are just a sampling of the problems that make interaction in online courses complicated.

To respond to these issues, the researchers in this study had to be creative to ensure that students continued developing key oral expression skills and maintained LLM. An innovative e-tandem program was developed to provide learners with the chance to practice their skills in an authentic context with a speaker of their target foreign language. Anchored in research in LLM and online, collaborative learning, this study analyzes student feedback to an e-tandem project, to determine the impact of such programs on motivation and language learning. Guiding the study are two principal research questions:

First Research Question: What impact do online language exchanges have on learner motivation?

Hypothesis one: It is expected that e-tandems would have a positive impact on LLM. Indeed, research indicates that students become more comfortable speaking with their tandem partners over time and that they even make the effort to talk more, so that the exchange is successful (Develotte, Guichon, & Kern, 2008; Jauregi & Melchor-Cuoto, 2017). The element of authentic socialization is also a major advantage of tandem programs and provides a novel opportunity for language practice not possible in a traditional language classroom (Vassallo & Talles, 2006). This opportunity could help students see themselves as L2 users. The novelty, the social element, and the fact that students report progress throughout several meetings all point to e-tandems being powerful motivators.

Second Research Question: What impact do online language exchanges have on student language learning?

Hypothesis two: It is expected that these online exchanges will be beneficial to student learning. Three major changes are anticipated: in line Develotte et al.'s (2008) findings, students will improve their oral proficiency. Additionally, again due to the novelty, the socialization and the authentic communication, it is thought that students will report more positive feelings about their language abilities and language learning in general. Lastly, as a result of the conversation practice with a native speaker, it is assumed that students will acquire new vocabulary and develop their listening comprehension skills.

The paper is divided into the following sections: a literature review summarizing findings in both LLM and e-tandem research, a description of the research methodology and data collection

instruments, a results section, followed by a discussion of the study's findings, and finally, our conclusions.

## Literature Review

As stated above, this study has been informed by research from several different subfields in foreign language learning. First and foremost, work from the field of LLM was crucial for interpreting our data. Additionally, research on e-tandems and online language exchange programs was analyzed to better understand their impact on language learning.

### *Language Learning Motivation*

Though historically difficult to define and measure, LLM is thought to be key to language learning success (Al-Bhustan, 2009). For decades, Gardner's work on language motivation has dominated research in the field. His research shows that motivation cannot be reduced to one's desire to learn a language, as it is a complex variable relating to one's identity, goals, actions, and experiences with the target language (Gardner, 2005).

The Socio-educational Model was developed to explain how a learner's beliefs about the learning context, the target language and numerous other factors, can be mediated by the motivation to impact learning success (Yashima, 2000). Central to this model are the concepts of integrativeness and instrumentality. Integrativeness is a deep appreciation and respect for the L2 culture, often accompanied by the desire to associate with it; although not the only determining factor in learning success, integrativeness pushes students to interact with the L2 community and its culture, leading to higher proficiency and better course grades (Coleman, 1995; Gardner, 1960). Instrumentality, on the other hand, is a desire to learn a language for practical reasons, such as finding a job or obtaining a degree; this orientation is unlikely to lead to long-term learning effort once the goal is attained (Gardner, 1960).

Research has shown that university students often exhibit higher levels of instrumentality, as their principal motives are getting good grades in English classes and finding a good job. Even in cases where integrativeness is present, instrumentality is the prevailing orientation (Kırkgöz, 2005; Wimolmas, 2012). A common trend in research is that foreign language majors report high levels of both integrativeness and instrumentality, while non-specialist students taking a language elective are more instrumentally motivated (Chalakh & Kassaian, 2010; Liu, 2007). Nevertheless, Moinvaziri's (2007) report on Iranian undergraduates in various majors shows that, even in a language elective class, both instrumentality and integrativeness can be present forces.

According to Aubrey (2014), "Identity has always been a distinguishing factor of L2 motivation", (p. 155) even integrativeness defines motivation in terms of a learner's identification with a target culture. The way that learners identify and view themselves as users of the target language can have an impact on their learning effort (Chen, 2012). These self-concepts are based on real-life experiences, so the language teacher and experiences using the L2 can help shape them (Murray, 2011).

To better account for the role of self-concepts, Dörnyei (2009) proposes the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). This theory describes three different motivational orientations that could impact learning behaviors. The first, and most relevant to this study, is the L2 Ideal Self (L2IS); people identifying with this orientation wish to learn the L2 because they have a very detailed vision of who they wish to become in the future and that vision includes L2 skills. Next, is the L2 Ought to Self (L2OS); those relating to this orientation try to learn an L2 because they

wish to avoid the negative consequences of not learning it, such as failing an exam. Lastly, the L2 Learning Environment (L2LE), which includes teachers, peers, classroom activities, the classroom setup and even the larger context of a learner's life can also have an impact on LLM. The L2MSS goes a step beyond the Socio-educational Model and the concept of integrativeness. While integrativeness may be useful for explaining LLM in certain contexts, world languages like English are not associated with only one culture so students may be highly motivated despite not wishing to integrate into any anglophone society (Ushioda, 2006). The L2MSS compensates for this by showing that one's self-concept may include becoming a globalized, well-rounded polyglot or working in a large, international organization; such objectives could feasibly lead to long-term motivation.

In research, the L2MSS has been used to show connections between the three motivational orientations and language learning efforts. In their study on Tibetan students learning Chinese as a second language, Li and Zhang (2020), used a questionnaire to better understand motivation in Chinese courses. Their results confirmed that a strong L2IS orientation was positively correlated to a student's intended learning effort, while the L2OS was not. Similarly, Papi and Khajavy (2021) studied the motivation of Iranian university students learning English and found that the L2IS was a strong, positive predictor of L2 learning enjoyment. On a smaller scale, Lamb (2009) presents similar findings with two Indonesian students enrolled in high school English classes. One had very clear goals for wanting to study abroad and becoming an international person capable of working between Indonesia and the United States; this student regularly sought out opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom. The other student, however, simply wanted to pass state tests to graduate; this second student, consequently, did not report participating in any activities to learn English outside of doing the minimum in English class.

These studies highlight the need for helping students develop a detailed self-concept to help them establish goals that include language mastery. E-tandems can be useful for helping students develop their L2IS as well as also their sense of integrativeness. Indeed, e-tandems are referenced in the guide *Motivating Learning* as an activity that allows students to enter the L2 community and make their future L2 visions real (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2014).

### ***E-Tandems and the Foreign Language Classroom***

Bilingual language tandems have existed for well over fifty years and have recently attracted increased attention from researchers in language acquisition (Fuchs, Snyder, & Tung, 2022; O'Dowd & O'Rourke, 2019; Vassallo & Telles, 2006). Tandems are guided exchanges between speakers of different languages which allow participants to practice the native language of their partner (Aranha & Wigham, 2020); in the case of the present study, our tandems involve French students learning English and American students learning French.

Over the years, as technology has developed, so have the possibilities for organizing language tandems. Online tandems, or e-tandems, provide numerous benefits and even compensate for some of the shortcomings of the traditional classroom. For instance, the goal of De Martino's (2020) e-tandem program between Italian and German university students was "to give them the opportunity not only to experience interculturality inside and outside the classroom but also to promote intercultural awareness" (paragraph 8). Furthermore, by allowing students some control over the direction of the conversation and its organization, teachers can increase learner autonomy, a major goal for many universities (Batardière & Jeanneau, 2020). Most importantly for the present

study, e-tandems are meant to be motivating and pleasant, as learners must be active and involved throughout the entire exchange to derive maximum benefits (Vassallo & Telles, 2006).

Research has also presented some potential difficulties in telecollaboration programs that this study has had to consider. In a description of an Italian university's large-scale telecollaboration program with various countries, Longhi and Valero Gisbert (2020) pointed out that differences in personalities and common interests can make it hard for students to carry on a conversation long enough for it to have an impact on their communication skills. Debras (2020) points out that the absence of body language and visual cues can also impede online conversation stating:

A comfortable compromise in terms of cross-cultural interactional distance is probably easier to find during face-to-face interaction, since the possibility of mutual monitoring encourages the development of trust and closeness, allowing participants to look out for, or at least take guesses at, signs of awkwardness on the part of their partner. (paragraph 12)

Additionally, a report on European Union telecollaboration programs by Guth, Helm, and O'Dowd (2012) suggested that setting up online exchanges can be tricky and time-consuming; students need training on how to use the exchange platform and sufficient flexibility to find a meeting time that works for both participants. Being in different time zones, of course, complicates this further.

In addition to descriptions of online exchange programs, research on e-tandems gives insight into the impact on language skills and attitudes towards language learning in general. Fondo and Jacobetty (2020), for example, set out to explore the specificities of foreign language anxiety in online tandems. In their studies, Irish and American university students participated in online exchanges with Spanish and Mexican university students; results showed that factors such as communication apprehension and anxiety about the learning process were present, just as they would be in a typical language classroom, as were some factors unique to the online context, such as technophobia and anxieties relating to communicating online.

Highlighting the motivational potential of e-tandems, Develotte et al. (2008) describe their experience involving a French and an American university. They found that, even if students experienced some anxiety in their early exchanges, these feelings typically subsided after a few meetings, as students became less worried about making mistakes and more focused on communicating their message. Researchers observed that students appeared less inhibited as the program went on and made extra efforts to ensure that conversations were fruitful. They concluded therefore that e-tandems can be powerful motivators given the authenticity of the communicative experience. In a Spanish language tandem between a Spanish and an American institution, Sebastian and Souza (2022) found "students responded very favorably to the question asking if their interest in study abroad had increased due to their participation in the virtual exchange" (p. 102), such a result highlights a stronger feeling of integrativeness and desire to interact with the target language.

## Method

To respond to the research questions, a two-month-long study was devised involving a series of online video conference calls and questionnaires. Both quantitative data, in the form of Likert-scale questions, and qualitative data, in the form of open-ended questions, were collected. This section presents the participants in this study along with the study design, research instrument and data analyzing process.

### ***Participants***

A small-scale convenience sampling was used to find participants for this project; it included students enrolled in the researchers' language courses. Participants in the programs were enrolled either at Cornell University (USA) in the intermediate-level Medical French course or the University of Paris Nanterre (France), in the Faculty of Sports Sciences, in an upper-intermediate specialized English course.

While all students were encouraged to take part in the program, participation was ultimately optional, as it naturally required a time commitment. Initially, 10 pairs were formed, each including one student from the USA and one student from France. Pairs were formed based on observations from the two teachers regarding students' proficiency levels in their target languages. Students with similar levels were matched, whenever possible. With some students dropping out and some not completing the feedback forms, data were collected and analyzed from seven Cornell University students and 10 University of Paris Nanterre students.

### ***The Study***

The study replicates the setup of the e-tandem program presented by Schug and Simon (2021), which featured Hungarian and French university students meeting to practice their English skills using Microsoft Teams and completing questionnaires to understand the impact on foreign language anxiety. As with their study, our e-tandem program required participants to complete at least 3 video conference calls and use a logbook (see Appendix A) with activities to do during each call. As the American students were focusing on medical sciences and the French students were focusing on sports sciences, the activities focused on the theme of health and exercise so that elements from both disciplines could be incorporated. The first tandem was meant to be an icebreaker, with interview and discussion questions to help students learn about their partners. The second tandem included some discussion questions as well as a role-play activity between a doctor and an athlete with a sports injury. The third tandem, again, contained discussion questions and an activity asking students to develop a business idea combining the studies of the two participants.

With permission from the participants, teachers shared the email addresses between pairs to facilitate the first contact. Students were told to initiate contact with their partners by a given deadline and organize the first meeting. From then on, they were in charge of organizing their meetings, on the platform of their choice at a rhythm of approximately one meeting every two to three weeks. While the University of Paris Nanterre and Cornell University offer students access to several video conferencing programs, many students opted for social media platforms, such as Whatsapp or Instagram to hold their calls.

### ***Research Instruments***

As in Schug and Simon (2021), the logbook contained a series of brief surveys asking students to comment on their e-tandem experience. After each of the three activities in the logbook, students were asked to complete a survey with five Likert scale questions and four open-ended questions; these questions asked for feedback regarding the tandem experience. The questionnaire items were divided as follows: the first three Likert questions related to self-efficacy and how students felt about their performance in the exchange, the fourth question asked for students' impressions of the tandem experience, and the fifth question asked about the level of effort students exerted during the exchange. Open-ended questions asked students what they liked and disliked about the experience and the activities.

A pre-questionnaire containing 13 Likert scale questions and a post-questionnaire containing 13 Likert scale items and three open-ended questions were also included to measure changes over time. The questionnaire items were adapted from Jauregi and Melchor-Couto (2017) and Schug (2019). The questionnaire items were divided as follows: the first three Likert questions related to self-efficacy and how students felt about their level in the target language, the next five questions were items relating to the L2 Ideal Self, and the final five questions were about how much effort students planned to exert in learning their target language. In the post-questionnaire, open-ended questions asked students to describe their e-tandem experience and comment on how it impacted their language learning.

The choice of logbooks was intentional, as De Martino (2020) notes the importance of regular and frequent participant feedback in e-tandem programs. Also, logbooks allow researchers to see changes over time and note any periods marked by particularly positive or negative experiences.

### Data Analysis

Responses in students' logbooks constituted the principal source of data for this study. For the Likert scale questions, the means and standard deviations of students' responses were calculated and tabulated for the factors of self-efficacy, L2 Ideal Self, and L2 Intended or Exerted Effort. Values were calculated for all three e-tandem meetings and for the pre-and post-questionnaires to show changes throughout the project.

Open-ended questions were also used to shed light on the student's experience in the program and their thoughts on the different activities. To analyze these responses, a coding guide was created, found in Appendix A. It contains codes for positive and negative comments about the tandem experience (E+, E-), positive and negative experiences about the specific activity (A+, A-), positive and negative comments about the use of technology (T+, T-), and positive, negative and neutral comments about the students' impressions of their language use and abilities (L+, L-, L0).

The coding procedure was based on the procedure explained by Schug and Simon (2021). Initial codes of E, A, T, and L were established before performing a detailed reading of student responses. These codes helped guide initial readings of the responses. Given the difference between positive and negative comments, positive and negative subcategories were created for the codes, so E became E+ and E-, for example. Responses were read and re-coded several times to ensure consistency in coding.

### Results

This section presents the data obtained from the logbook questionnaires. Table one contains the quantitative data derived from the Likert scale questions. Items relating to the same variable were combined and the mean and standard deviation of students' responses are presented. Cornell University values are tagged as CU and University of Paris Nanterre values are tagged as UPN.

Table 1. *Students' responses to the logbook questionnaires measuring self-efficacy, the L2 ideal self (L2IS), feelings about the experience, and L2 intended or exerted effort*

	Self-Efficacy	L2 Ideal Self (Pre- & Post- Questionnaires)	L2 Intended Effort (Pre- & Post- Questionnaires)
		Feelings about the experience (Tandems 1, 2, 3)	L2 Exerted Effort (Tandems 1, 2, 3)

Pre-Questionnaire	CU: 3.76 (0.16) UPN: 3.5 (0.1)	CU: 4.03 (.41) UPN: 3.96 (0.68)	CU: 3.91 (0.79) UPN: 3.84 (1.17)
Tandem 1	CU: 3.85 (0.14) UPN: 4.03 (0.12)	CU: 4.57 (0.53) UPN: 4.8 (0.42)	CU: 4.29 (0.76) UPN: 4.2 (0.92)
Tandem 2	CU: 3.81 (0.82) UPN: 4.03 (0.32)	CU: 4.71 (0.49) UPN: 4.6 (0.84)	CU: 4.43 (0.53) UPN: 4.5 (0.71)
Tandem 3	CU: 4.11 (0.1) UPN: 4.11 (0.38)	CU: 4.5 (0.84) UPN: 4.78 (0.44)	CU: 4.5 (0.55) UPN: 4.78 (0.67)
Post-Questionnaire	CU: 4.22 (0.1) UPN: 4.19 (0.23)	CU: 4.2 (0.3) UPN: 4.11 (1.11)	CU: 4 (1.02) UPN: 4.27 (0.23)

\*Values are rounded to the nearest 100<sup>th</sup>. Values in parentheses represent the standard deviation.

\*\*Likert scale questions were phrased in such a way that values closer to five indicate a positive experience or a high level of self-efficacy, motivation or effort. Values closer to one indicate a negative experience or low levels of self-efficacy, motivation, or effort.

Table one illustrates that learner motivation fluctuated during the experience as did the number of effort students exerted during each online exchange. In each tandem, students expressed positive opinions about the activities and reported putting forth a little more effort as the meetings progressed. A comparison between the pre-and post-questionnaires shows that these positive results seem to have led to a net increase in L2 intended learning effort, the L2IS and self-efficacy for students in both universities.

Table two presents the distribution of students' coded responses. Responses will be described in greater detail in the discussion section.

Table 2. *Distribution of students' coded responses to the logbook's open-ended questions for the three e-tandem meetings (T1, T2, T3) and the post-questionnaire (Post-Q)*

Category	Cornell University				University of Paris Nanterre			
	T1	T2	T3	Post-Q	T1	T2	T3	Post-Q
Tandem Experience								
E+	6	5	4	1	11	10	9	7
E-	5	2	3		3	1		
Technology								
T+					2	1		
T-	2	3	3		3	1	1	
Activity								

A+	5	9	9		9	18	8	
A-		3	3		2	8	8	
Language Skills								
L+	5	3	2	31	11	2		32
L-			1		2	2	2	4
L0				4				2

Table two indicates that learners had a lot to say about their tandem experiences. While many of the comments were coded as positive, particularly those related to language development, issues relating to technology and the activity require further discussion.

## Discussion

Throughout the tandem experience, regular student feedback was collected to understand how the program impacted students' learning and attitudes. Participants commented on a wide range of topics and their remarks merit further exploration.

Students made several references to the specific activities offered during the three tandem exercises. Students greatly appreciated having activities that were specifically adapted to their fields of study; of the 44 responses coded as A+ for Tandems two and three, 22 of them expressed appreciation for an activity that was relevant to the participants' fields of study. This may have facilitated conversation and helped prevent the awkward pauses and running out of things to talk about, a problem identified by Longi and Valero Gisbert (2020).

On the other hand, not all feedback on the activities was positive; as Table two shows, students from the University of Paris Nanterre had several comments coded as A-. As one student said, "I didn't really like the second part with the role play because that's not a natural discussion;" this comment seems to echo comments made by other students. While the activities were good in theory, in practice, they interrupted the spontaneity of the more open discussions, indicating that role plays, and simulations may not be suited to online lessons. Furthermore, as predicted, students experienced issues with finding a time to meet, coded as E-, and problems with internet connections, coded as T-. This appears to be a consistent problem in e-tandem research (Develotte et al., 2008; Longhi & Valero Gisbert, 2020), forcing one to wonder if these issues are simply an inevitable difficulty involved with this type of activity.

The following subsections discuss findings in greater detail to answer the two guiding research questions.

### ***RQ1: What impact do online exchanges have on learner motivation?***

Results from Table one show that between the pre-and post-questionnaire, students from both universities had more strongly developed L2IS and reported higher levels of L2 Intended Effort, with a particularly noticeable difference in L2 Intended Effort levels from University of Paris Nanterre students. These findings tend to validate the initial hypothesis that e-tandems have a positive impact on learner motivation, leading to increases.

A closer look at questionnaire responses sheds light on the reasons for this increase. First, Table one clearly shows that all three e-tandems received generally positive reviews from

participants, with no exchange averaging lower than 4.5/5. Indeed, of the 53 comments coded as E+, 28 of them focused on the positive dynamic between partners; one student from Cornell pointed out “I liked how relaxed [the conversation] was; we were both helping each other” while a student from University of Paris Nanterre explained, “It’s the third time where we call each other, so it’s easier to communicate with [my partner] and I like this process of tandem in [its] globality.” As the program went on, it appears that the conversations became more fluid and relaxed. As Gardner (2005) explains that motivation is at least partially dependent on one’s experiences with the target language, it is not surprising that having initial positive e-tandem experiences would make one want to continue having positive e-tandem experiences. The result of these repeated positive experiences could have a long-term positive impact on LLM. This finding is consistent with past research on e-tandems (Vassallo & Talles, 2006), showing students do indeed appreciate the opportunity to learn about a new culture and practice their language skills in an authentic context.

A form of integrativeness may be at play here as well, though slightly modified from the concept described by Gardner (1960); of the 17 responses coded as E+ in the first e-tandem, eight of them describe appreciating the opportunity to learn more about the target culture. For example, one student from France said, “That’s really interesting to talk about life in the US,” while one student from the US said, “I loved having... the opportunity to talk to someone who lives in France and who knows the culture” (translated). While these comments do not explicitly indicate a desire to integrate into the L2 community, they show a willingness to learn more about the target culture, an opportunity these e-tandems provided.

Lastly, it is important to note that two items relating to the L2IS (1. *When I think of my future [professional, academic, personal...] goals, English/French plays an important role* & 2. *In the future, I can see myself speaking English/French perfectly & effortlessly*) increased for both groups of students between the start and the end of the program. As suggested by Hadfield and Dörnyei’s (2014) guide, having online exchanges can make the L2 learning experience more real, an important step in strengthening one’s L2IS. This stronger self-concept could have naturally led to higher levels of intended effort and learning motivation, as was the case in Rajab, Roohbaksh, and Etemadzadeh (2012) and Li and Zhang (2020).

### ***RQ2: What impact do online language exchanges have on student language learning?***

The initial hypothesis stated that students’ main gains would be in oral skills, self-confidence, and positive feelings about language learning. It was also expected that other language skills, particularly vocabulary and listening comprehension skills would also be mentioned. Data collected from this study tend to validate this hypothesis. As Table one shows, self-efficacy steadily increased for both groups of students after every tandem experience, leading to an overall increase in the post-questionnaire.

Concerning oral skills, of the 86 comments coded as L+, 18 related to improved communication skills, with some comments related to speaking fluency and others related to accent and pronunciation. One comment from a University of Paris Nanterre student captures the spirit of these responses quite well: “This allowed me to improve orally, [which] was my defect, my partner corrected me when I made pronunciation mistakes or when I lacked vocabulary.” Such findings echo what was found in Schug and Simon (2021) and Develotte et al (2008); students strengthened their communication skills in a very comprehensive way. It was not simply oral fluency that progressed, but also authentic speaking and interacting skills.

Additionally, other language gains were mentioned with some frequency in the open-ended questions. Seven responses, for example, referenced expanding vocabulary, particularly related to their field of study, as illustrated by one Cornell University student's comment about the second tandem: "By this exercise, we could really apply all the vocabulary that we learnt to realistic situations like spraining one's arms while playing a sport etc." This finding is indeed encouraging, as the exercises were conceived to help students acquire vocabulary that would be relevant in their future professional lives.

An unexpected impact on language learning that resulted from these tandems was that some students seem to have revelations relating to their language difficulties. Indeed, 5 responses coded as L- featured comments where students reflect on what they need to do moving forward. One student from the University of Paris Nanterre represents this pattern with the comment "I realize now, that I have to learn to make fewer mistakes orally, what I think will come by practicing (sic)." The student recognized persistent difficulties throughout the tandem experience and acknowledged the importance of practicing to overcome them. This comment hints at increased learner autonomy, a benefit of e-tandems noted by Batardière and Jeanneau (2020). Future research should study the long-term impacts of immersion experiences on language learning, to see how or if these reflections translate into concrete actions from the learner.

Of course, this study has several of the limitations that are common in small-scale research. With responses from only 17 participants, results are difficult to generalize. Additionally, the unique context of conducting an online international exchange during a pandemic surely had some impact here; in times when students are not in lockdown, they will likely have other obligations competing for their attention, which will surely have an impact on their LLM. Nevertheless, the consistent, positive feedback gives reason to be optimistic about e-tandems in other contexts.

## Conclusion

The present paper described an international e-tandem program, to understand such a program's impact on students' language learning and their motivation. American students learning French and French students learning English participated in a series of video conferences to have discussions and complete activities related to their fields of study. Data from the participants' logbooks largely describe the project as a very positive experience. Learners were able to meet new people and learn more about a different culture, gain confidence in their speaking skills, develop fluency, and expand their vocabulary. Most importantly, it was found that e-tandems seem to have some capacity to increase learner motivation. Despite the small sample size used in this study, these findings suggest several benefits to using e-tandems; they should be considered a valuable tool in language courses.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A Useful Documents

- 1) A copy of the logbook given to students at the Université Paris Nanterre can be found at this link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1meEMMqxYr5-HwvHO6F5kKqYfD4o2EMyrgNWP-Cup61E/edit?usp=sharing>. An essentially identical version was given to Cornell University students, except references to learning English were replaced with learning French.
- 2) Link to the coding guide:  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZWHn3WIHr5bxnzCGpHOVI5RnNWNNeTqQ7PJop\\_fjtfcY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZWHn3WIHr5bxnzCGpHOVI5RnNWNNeTqQ7PJop_fjtfcY/edit?usp=sharing)