Face-to-face tandem challenges the supervision of authorities, normally unwilling to grant academic credits to activities outside their control. This is why tandem is frequently considered a complementary activity, hardly ever included in the regular academic agenda of degree designers or acknowledged as a regular (official) course. Institutions are frequently reluctant because wild tandem, which has normally been the model, escapes traditional assessment by a professor. Yet, on-line tandem has not convinced administrations either. For them, the assessment system is questionable either because they have no direct access to the unavailable student, or simply because they ignore the kind of work and learning processes involved in the methodology. If the learner plans his/her objectives and the model is ipsative, academic officials cannot measure the different levels of knowledge to justify (1) a homogenous learning process and (2) the achievement of a pre-established amount of knowledge or competences. Paradoxically, they demand individualized teaching in the classroom.

It is about time to convince the officialdom (and ourselves) that a reasonable assessment system for a face-to-face tandem program is possible. If tandem is built on autonomy, reciprocity and authenticity, perhaps the evaluation system should rely upon the same principles. In face-to-face tandem only the learner can determine whether autonomy in the learning process has meant any definite gain (or any undesired drawback), and only he or she can appropriately self-evaluate their progress in the cultural, linguistic and metacognitive areas. Self-evaluation is a must in an autonomous learning system, where responsibility and honesty are givens. If reciprocity is the other pillar, there should be reciprocity in the assessment. The learner should evaluate the mentor as mentor and the mentor as learner. This is a two-way evaluation which implies also responsibility and honesty on both sides. Self-assessment and the assessment of peers are authentic evaluative methods. Tutors (teachers acting as advisors and testers) are the objective, distanced evaluators of goals. This is “third party” evaluation, which is frequently the only assessment method in real life. This turns it into another authentic evaluative method.

The proposed model provides a coherent and consistent set of surveys to help self-, peer, and tutor assessments coexist in a reasonably balanced equilibrium, while it guaranties the administration of the student pair at a distance, allowing for objectivity, autonomy, reciprocity and authenticity. If the model works, and is
adopted (while adaptations are expected) by those who believe in the advantages of the methodology, perhaps we could start pressing higher education institutions to acknowledge tandem as a valid methodology that may be worth implementing as part of the regular curriculum.

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