



HARIDUS- JA NOORTEAMET

## The experience of using tandem language learning in professional higher education

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# The socio-political context of the projects

uncertainties

crises (incl. migration since 2022)

societal demands to ensure health and social safety and order

the need for language skills to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds

the need for pragmatic and effective methods of teaching non-native languages for specific professional purposes

## TANDEM LANGUAGE LEARNING + simulation-based training + LSP instruction

Learning in tandem  
is a form of  
intercultural  
learning with a  
partner

Students  
with different mother  
tongues  
meet to help one  
another improve their  
language skills

Independent  
learning  
form

# Participants

Students from three universities of applied sciences took part in professional and language training:

- ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF SECURITY SCIENCES (police service cadets)
- TALLINN HEALTH CARE COLLEGE (nurses, care workers and paramedics)
- TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (social workers, engineers)

## Theoretical and methodological background

- An approach in student exchange programs, to facilitate the language learning process for students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
- Collaborative arrangement;
- Regular interaction within the structured language exchange activities;
- Authentic communication contexts.

[Batardière et al 2015; Almazova et al, 2020; Batardière & Jeanneau, 2020; Healey, 2020; Lewis, 2020]

- Balanced exchange of knowledge and expertise between the participants;
- Create a low-anxiety learning environment.

[Pomino & Gil-Salom, 2016; Healey, 2020]

- Cooperative learning environment with constructive feedback, correction, and clarification.

[Batardière & Jeanneau, 2020]

# Subject and language trainers

Language trainers  
(Estonian and  
Russian)

Specialty trainers  
(lecturers teaching  
first aid)

Tour guides  
(guided tours in a  
museum)

# Layout

- 2018 - 44 students (language cafes)
- 2022 - 48 students (tandem language learning camp)
- 2023 - 60 students (online & onsite language classes, individual work + tandem language learning camp)

- Basic level of Russian language proficiency
- Basic and intermediate level of Estonian language
- Bilingual students

At the end of the course, the learners demonstrated their proficiency in Estonian and Russian and professional skills in practice

## The purposes of the projects

- Help learners to overcome the language barrier (both Estonian and Russian) using tandem language learning method
- Improve their ability to express themselves in a foreign language in work-related situations
- Foster interdisciplinary collaboration (police/paramedics)
- Improve professional and language skills of students
- Develop general and professional vocabulary (e-learning materials, study sessions, individual work, guided tours in a museum during final sessions)



# The goals of the projects

To help students:

- overcome the language barrier in both Estonian and Russian;
- enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in work-related situations;
- foster interdisciplinary cooperation between police cadets, engineering, social work, nursing, paramedic and care work students.

## Topics and activities

Students acquired the following professional and linguistic knowledge and skills:

- reacting adequately in a crisis situation in Estonian and Russian
- communicating in Estonian and Russian with a difficult client
- instructing a client in Estonian and Russian on how to administer first aid
- communicating in Estonian and Russian in work situations
- description of person's appearance
- asking and giving directions



**2023**

**"Providing First Aid"**

**Project activities**

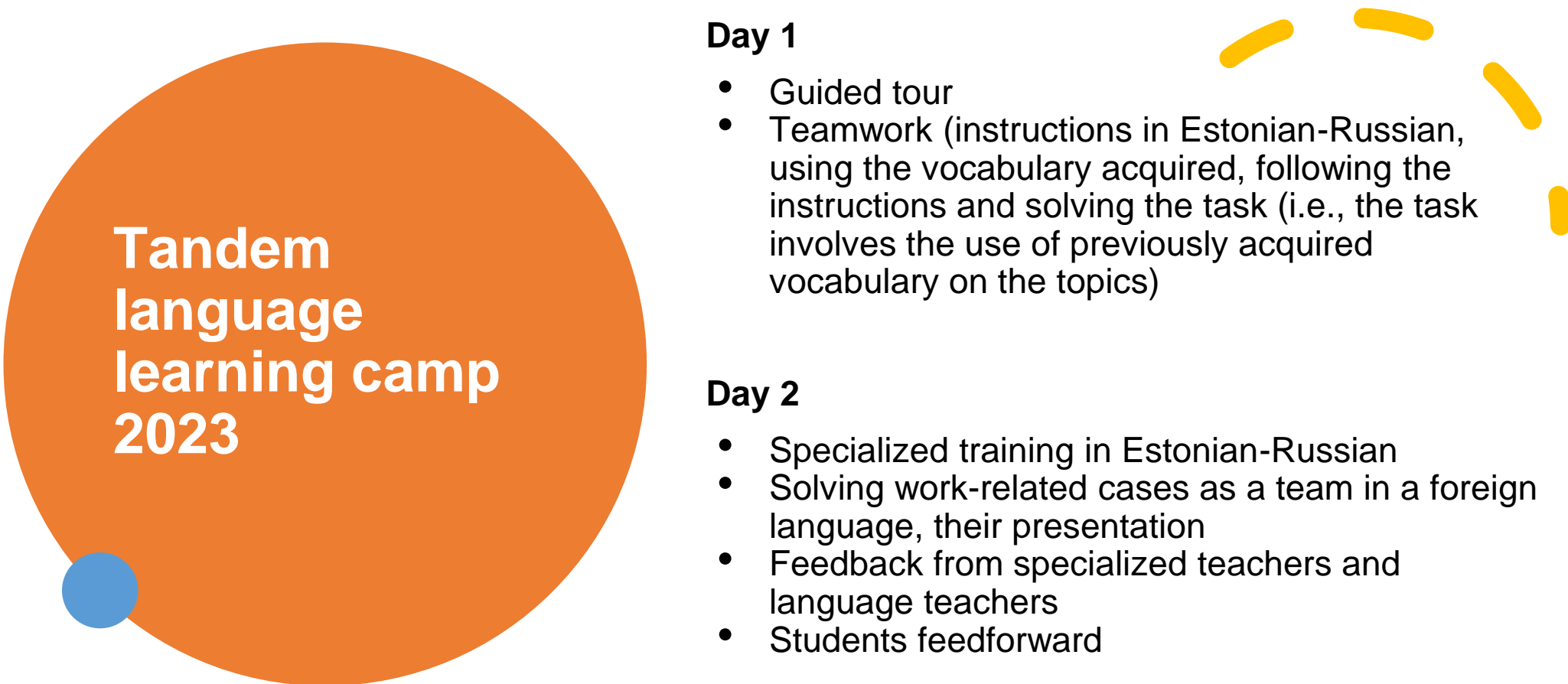
**Auditory (language cafes) and online classes**

**Individual work on Moodle and tandem learning**

Topics:

- Personal data and personal description
- Giving directions, offering assistance
- First aid terminology

**Tandem language learning camp**



# Tandem language learning camp 2023

## Day 1

- Guided tour
- Teamwork (instructions in Estonian-Russian, using the vocabulary acquired, following the instructions and solving the task (i.e., the task involves the use of previously acquired vocabulary on the topics))

## Day 2

- Specialized training in Estonian-Russian
- Solving work-related cases as a team in a foreign language, their presentation
- Feedback from specialized teachers and language teachers
- Students feedforward

## Final assignment

(demonstration of case solving)



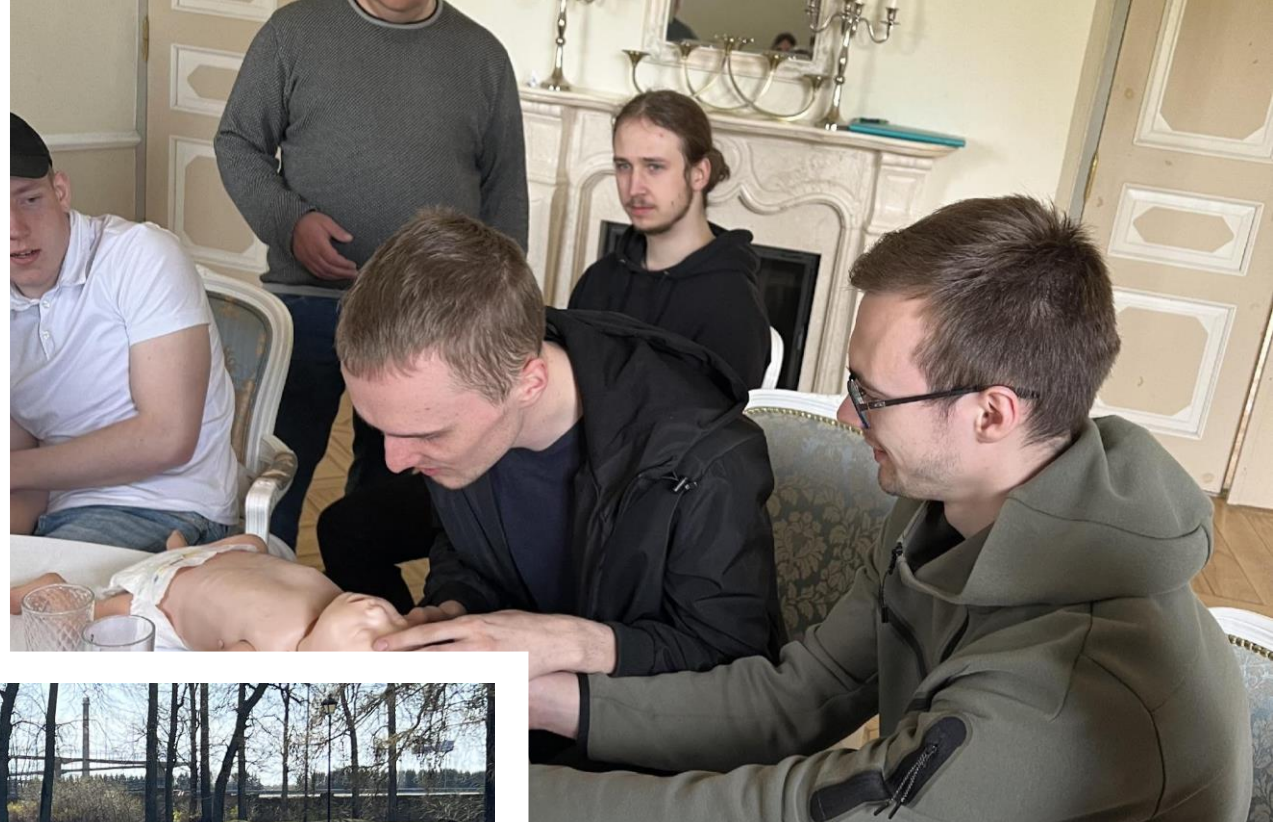
### Tandem specialty and language activities

- Assessment of the casualty's condition and communication
- Call for help
- Communication with the Emergency centre
- First aid (cases: stroke, allergy, loss of consciousness, types of wounds, fracture, hypothermia)



### First aid activities

- Consciousness check
- CPR
- Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation
- AED
- Wound treatment



# Project summary

The project activated learners:

- to communicate with each other not in their mother tongue;
- improved teamwork and cooperation skills in emergency situations;
- gave the opportunity to act out work situations.

- The additional language training was provided in a form of tandem learning.
- An active and problem-based learning methods were used in projects.
- Tasks were solved individually, in pairs and in groups, group discussions and role-plays.

Based on feedforward from the students, there were improvements:

- more general language;
- venue;
- volume of the classes;
- more topics and active learning;
- more language practice

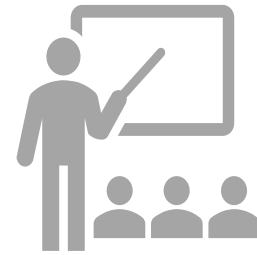
Students feedback 2023:

- out-of-comfort-zone active language learning environment;
- networking;
- work-related simulation;
- longer-lasting projects;
- equal number of Estonian and Russian participants.

# Conclusion



inspiring results  
of the projects



the effectiveness of  
the tandem approach  
to language learning



the importance of  
creating authentic  
environments

the importance of  
practical scenarios in  
language teaching



the value of tandem language  
learning and the integration of  
simulation in the teaching of  
non-native languages for  
specific purposes







Thank you for your  
attention!