

IMFLIT III 2025 UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DEL ESTADO DE HIDALGO (UAEH) PACHUCA,  
MÉXICO

# **Innovating with eTandem in school contexts: Challenges and strategies for moving forward**

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# Plan

**Introduction**

**Theoretical framework**

**Methodology**

**Results & Discussion**

# Introduction: eTandem in school contexts

## **Most studies**

**-university students**

## **GAP:**

**- SCHOOL CONTEXTS**

## **Research – school contexts**

- Clavel-Arroitia (2019)
- Jauregi & Melchor-Coutu (2017, 2018)
- Jauregi, de Graaff, van den Bergh, Kriz (2012)
- Klen-Alves & Tiraboschi (2018)

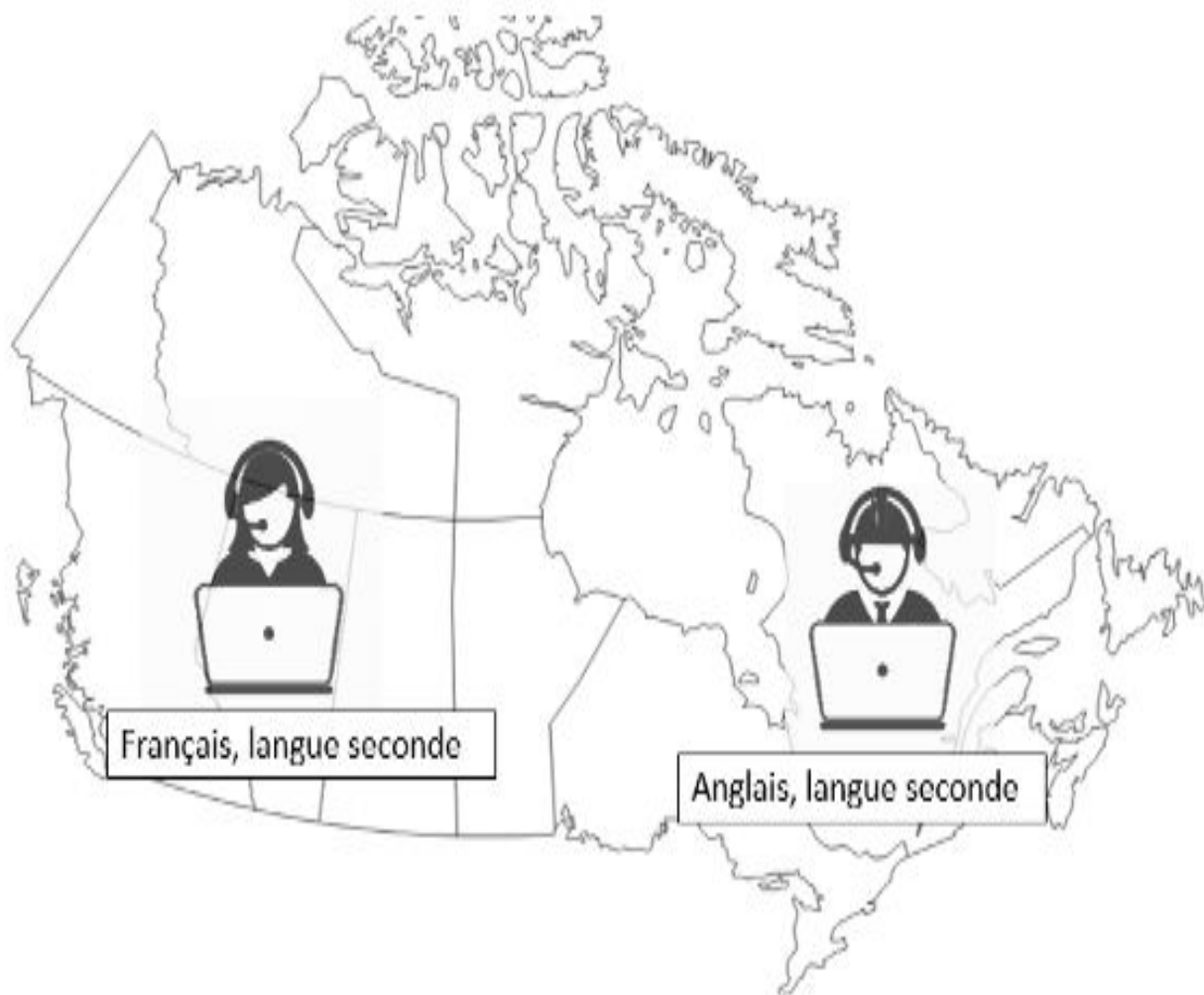
## **Canadian (Quebec) Context**

- Flick (2013)
- Giguère & Parks (2018)
- Priego (2011)

# Province of Quebec - Canada



# Potential eTandem partners

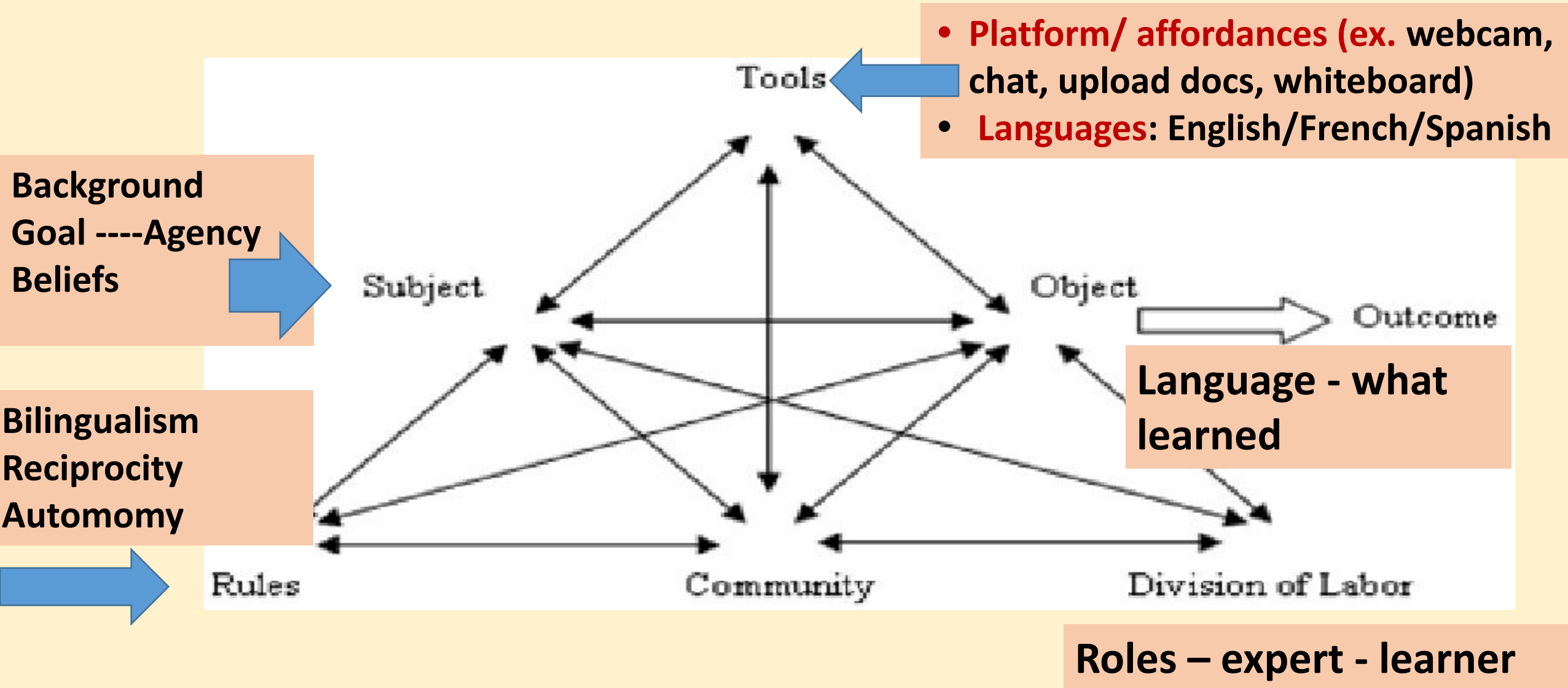


# **RESEARCH QUESTION S**

1. How do teachers and students view the benefits of eTandem exchanges?

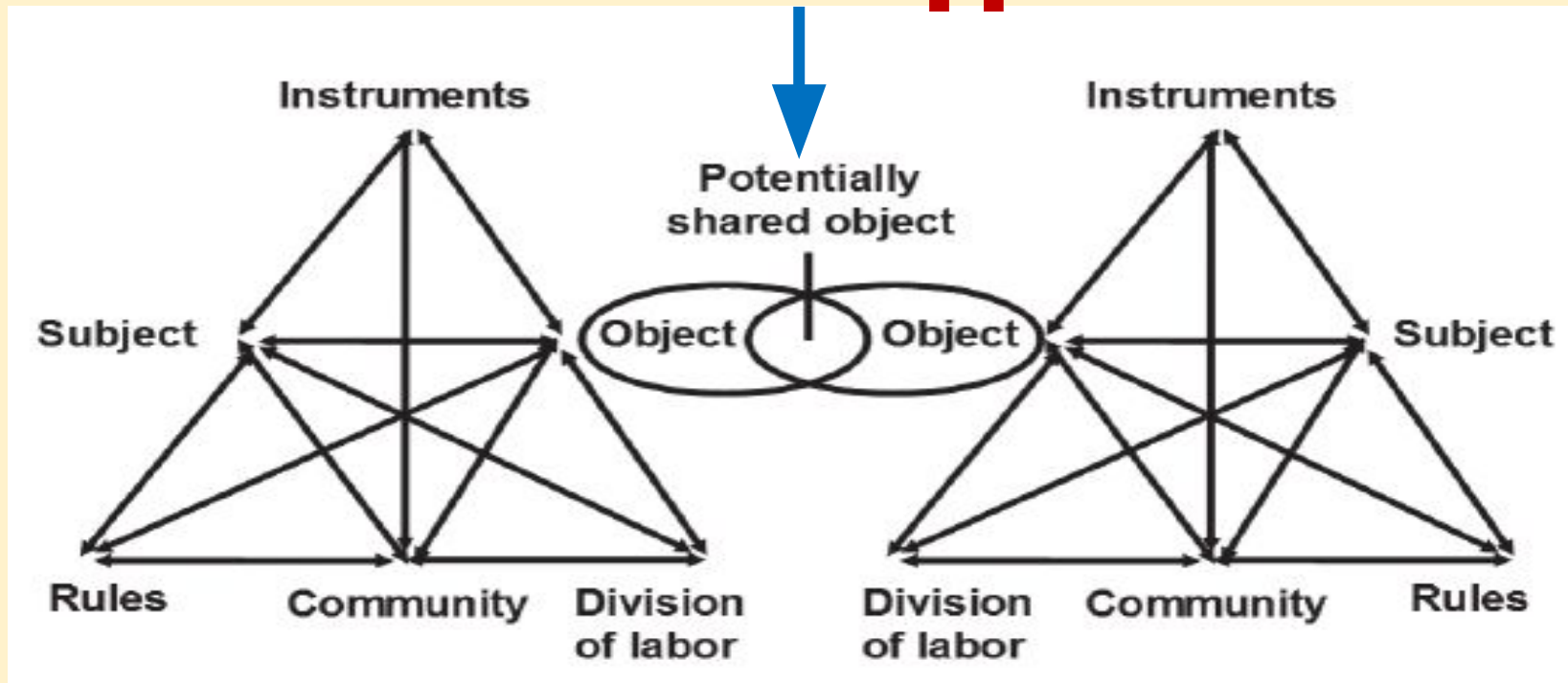
2. What are the challenges faced by teachers who wish to engage in eTandem exchanges?

# Theoretical Framework – Activity theory (Engeström)



# Theoretical Framework – Activity Theory(Engeström)

## eTandem approach



Schools – Quebec

Schools – Ontario, United States, Mexico



# Activity theory - Innovation

## Complex process

- During the implementation process
  - \* tensions/ conflicts
  - \* potentially transformative

## Varied Outcomes

- fully realized
- stagnate
- abandoned

# Methodology - Participants

GRANT –  
FRQSC +  
Quebec  
Ministry of  
Education  
Project:  
2020 – 2023  
\* COVID-19  
Pandemic

SCHOOLS	eTandems partners	Partner schools
1 Elementary	1 ESL-FSL Grade 6 ESL Intensive	Australia, US, province of Ontario (Canada)
5 Secondary	3 ESL-FSL	
	2 Spanish-FSL	Mexico

# METHODOLOGY - Data Collection Procedures

1. QUESTIONNAIRES -  
students

- initial background
- end-of-project

2. INTERVIEWS  
(end-of-project)

- case study students
- teachers

**3. PRODUCTS.**

**Tasks completed  
by case study  
students**

4.

**QUESTIONNAIRE  
S - parents**

# **RESEARCH QUESTION**

## **RESULTS**

1. How do teachers and students view the benefits of eTandem exchanges?

# BENEFIT 1: Helped to reinforce identifies as bilingual/multilingual speakers

## Initial questionnaires:

- fun
- making friends
- developing language skills

Parents - favorable

## Willingness to interact with partners in L1 (French):

**Émilie:** We gave each other corrections, we helped each other. I helped her in French and she helped me in English. I found it super interesting to do that with her.

**Interviewer:** How do you feel when you help another person learn French?

**Émlie:** Well, I'm happy to help someone else learn French because I think it's a beautiful language too.

## BENEFIT 2: Potential for interdisciplinary collaboration with L1 French language arts teachers

Grade 6 intensive ESL class

- French L1 teacher
- Helped the children give feedback on French

- Integrated some of the French writing tasks into her class**
- Advantage: an authentic context**

# BENEFIT 3: Students with learning challenges/ diverse needs – asynchronous tasks

## Secondary

- 2 autistic students
- 2 dyslexic students
- slower students

## Grade 6 intensive ESL class

- Visually impaired student

# BENEFIT 4: cultural learning

## Spanish learners -FSL groups in Mexico

- Padlet
- Food, festivities, music

## Grade 6 intensive ESL students – FSL students in Australia

- ESL - created videos of their schools**
- exchanged gifts at Christmas**



# BENEFIT 5: enhanced digital competency

Initial questionnaire:  
familiarity with social media  
sites:

- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Facebook
- Messenger
- YouTube

**Platforms used for  
eTandem:**

- Padlet**
- Flipgrid**
- Tandem Canada Platform**
- audio/video capsules**
- One Drive**
- Email**
- Zoom**

# **RESEARCH QUESTION**

## **RESULTS**

2. What are the challenges faced by teachers who wish to engage in eTandem exchanges?

# CHALLENGE 1: Lack of technological support in the school environment

1. Lack of computers
  - \* typically reserve Chrombooks – carts
2. Logistics related to technological equipment and rooms
  - \* recording audio/video capsules
  - \* videoconferencing
3. firewalls
  - \* Tandem Canada platform

# CHALLENGE 2: Pedagogical beliefs

## BILINGUAL PRINCIPLE

- Problem for certain teachers
- Did not want their students to communicate in the L1 (French)
- Why? **School curriculum** emphasized maximizing the use of the target language (English or Spanish)

**One secondary teacher:**

- « **slippery slope** »
- « **fear of being judged** » by colleagues if observed having his students use **French**

# CHALLENGE 3: Gaps in teachers' techno-pedagogical knowledge

Lack of understanding how to use the eTandem activity to maximize language learning:

## **-After the exchange**

- \* reinvestment activities for pair/group work
- \* reflections on strategies

## **Lack of preparation for video-conferencing**

**-Expecting students to liaise with partners in Mexico to arrange for times outside of class**

**Lack of planning with partners/ need to liase more closely with partners**

# CONCLUSION – MOVING FORWARD: Innovation within an Activity Theory perspective

## 1. School administrators

- more technological support

## 2. Ministry of Education

- Change in school curriculum –
- Promote eTandems as valued pedagogical activities
- Acknowledge the importance of the bilingual principle

## 3. Universities

### Université Laval

- TLL included in teacher education programs

# CONCLUSION – MOVING FORWARD: Innovation within an Activity Theory perspective

- **Tandem language learning research group**

- resources + webinars

[www.groupecherchealt.flsh.ulaval.ca](http://www.groupecherchealt.flsh.ulaval.ca)

- **Tandem Canada platform**

<https://www.tandem.ulaval.ca/>



# Gracias por su atención

## Acknowledgements

This research was made possible by a grant from the *Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société* and the Quebec Ministry of Education.



The image shows the top portion of the Tandem Canada website. At the top is a blue navigation bar with links: 'Page d'accueil', 'À propos', 'Recherche', and 'FR'. Below this is a large banner image featuring a tandem bicycle with the word 'Tandem' in a large, stylized font, and 'Canada' underneath. The background of the banner shows two silhouetted figures on a rocky outcrop, reaching out to each other against a sunset sky. Below the banner, the text reads: 'Une plateforme pour apprendre le français, l'anglais et l'espagnol en tandem'. There are two sections for user login: one for teachers ('Vous êtes enseignant(e)') and one for students ('Vous êtes étudiant(e)'). Each section has a 'Connexion' button with a right-pointing arrow icon. Below the teacher login button is a link: 'Si vous n'avez pas de compte, cliquez ici'. Below the student login button is the text: 'Si vous n'avez pas de compte, demandez à votre enseignant(e) d'inscrire votre classe.'