

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed judges,

We stand opposed to the notion that competition is more important than cooperation in the studying process. Our peer-reviewed evidence shows cooperation yields stronger, more sustainable learning outcomes: a meta-analysis found cooperative learning has a medium-to-large effect on mathematics achievement ($ES = 0.89$), far surpassing traditional, competitive approaches. In another study, collaborative problem solving significantly enhanced critical thinking, with an effect size of 0.82, demonstrating that teamwork sharpens analytical skills more effectively than individual rivalry.

Consider the words of Helen Keller: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” This wisdom—documented in her vaudeville speeches—underscores that learning thrives on mutual support and shared insight, not cutthroat comparison. Likewise, the African proverb “If you want to go far, go together” reminds us that enduring success depends on collective effort, not solo sprints.

Theoretical backing comes from social interdependence theory: when students pursue shared goals, positive interdependence fosters trust, reduces social loafing, and maximizes individual accountability within a group framework. David W. Johnson’s seminal research shows cooperative structures outperform both competitive and individualistic arrangements across diverse educational settings.

Real-world milestones further affirm cooperation’s supremacy. The Human Genome Project, involving over 2,800 researchers across six nations, delivered the first human genome draft two years ahead of schedule through coordinated effort, data sharing, and collective problem solving—not through isolated competition. This achievement transformed medicine, underscoring that collaboration accelerates discovery in ways competition cannot.

Anticipating the proposition’s rebuttal that competition “builds resilience,” we argue that cooperative challenges also cultivate grit: navigating group dynamics, overcoming disagreements, and reaching consensus require emotional intelligence and adaptability—skills equally vital for life’s pressures. When opponents claim competition “prepares students for real-world stress,” we counter that modern workplaces prioritize teamwork, with 75 % of employers ranking collaboration as the top skill for new hires—evidence that cooperation is the real-world imperative.

In conclusion, while healthy competition can motivate, it is cooperation that sustains motivation, deepens understanding, and fosters the interpersonal and cognitive skills essential for academic and professional success. Let us choose synergy over rivalry, because in learning, as in life, we truly go farther together.

Thank you.