**Cooperative learning and the three baskets**

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Academic goals within cooperative learning are always coupled by a supporting social skill. Children and young people are not born with the ability to interact with others and need these to be explicitly taught. They must also practice these social skills habitually so they can experience success in developing both socially and academically. Cooperative learning has five key elements which must always be present. These are positive interdependence, individual accountability, face to face promotive interaction, social interaction skills and group processing.

The methodology of cooperative learning is closely linked with the pedagogical approach ‘growth mindset’. This link is evidenced by research conducted by Nicoll (2014) who states the cultivation of a resilience based climate (growth mindset) centres on the promotion of social-emotional competencies such as responsiveness to others and positive relationship skills. These competencies fused with the research by the Johnsons on Cooperative Learning are bound to create the optimal learning environment.

There are a number of researched benefits in the use of cooperative learning. These may be categorised into three ‘baskets’:

* **Effort to Achieve:** higher attainment, greater productivity, retention, intrinsic motivation, critical thinking, higher-level reasoning
* **Positive Relationships:** esprit-de-corps, caring relationships personal and academic support, cohesion ,valuing of diversity
* **Psychological Adjustment, Social Competence:** social development, social competencies, self-esteem, self-identity, ability to cope with adversity and stress (resilience)

Reference: Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T. and Holubec, E. J. (1990), *Circles of Learning Cooperation in the Classroom Third Edition*, Interaction, Minnesota.

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The Johnsons define cooperative learning as “the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximise their own and each other’s learning.” A task is set where small structured small groups of between two and four children and young people work through until they have successfully understood and completed it. Cooperative groups are carefully structured so that children and young people perceive that their success or failure depends on the success or failure of the whole small group and not solely individual efforts. Although being successful or unsuccessful depends on the entire group, each child or young person is individually accountable.