

Module E

Learning Guide

Promoting the Concepts of European Identity and Values in Ukrainian University Students

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UkraStud project team



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Introduction

Across European higher education, the importance of inclusion, mobility, and creating environments where all students feel safe, respected, and connected has become increasingly evident. The arrival of a large number of Ukrainian students into European university systems—driven by war, displacement, and rapid social change—has further highlighted the need to understand how integration unfolds and how universities shape students' sense of belonging and identity. In this context, European identity is not an abstract political construct but a lived experience formed through everyday academic interactions, perceptions of fairness, and moments of inclusion and mutual respect.

This script was developed within an Erasmus+ project dedicated to supporting Ukrainian students and strengthening inclusive practices in higher education. It starts from the recognition that universities are key spaces of social integration, and that tutors and teachers play a central role in shaping students' daily academic experiences. Rather than presenting European identity as a fixed category, the script frames it as a dynamic process that emerges through interaction, collaboration, and experiences of transparent and supportive academic practices. Findings from the UkraStud project further demonstrate that positive peer contact, clear communication, accessible support, and predictable academic procedures significantly enhance students' sense of belonging and strengthen their connection to European values.

The script explores the cultural, political, and civic dimensions of European identity, the six core values of the European Union as defined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, and the ways these values can be translated into everyday academic practice. Special attention is given to the role of tutors in creating safe, predictable, and inclusive learning environments, as well as strategies for fostering positive peer interactions, recognizing early signs of stress, and supporting active participation in European initiatives and opportunities.

The aim is not only to provide a theoretical framework but also to offer concrete, practical, and low-threshold strategies that tutors can implement immediately—ranging from clarifying tasks and assessment criteria, to encouraging dialogue and critical thinking, to creating spaces where diversity is respected and students feel seen, valued, and included. In doing so, the script builds a bridge between European values and students' everyday academic experiences, particularly for those navigating uncertainty, adaptation, or displacement.

Ultimately, this script seeks to empower university staff to recognize their essential role in shaping Europe's future—through small but consistent actions that help students find their place in the academic community, develop a sense of belonging, and engage actively in the European project.



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1. What is European Identity? Unpacking a Complex Concept

European identity is a multifaceted and evolving concept shaped by cultural traditions, political values, and civic practices that characterize contemporary Europe. Rather than functioning as a fixed or uniform label, it emerges through lived experiences, social interactions, and participation in shared institutions. Understanding European identity requires examining its cultural, political, and civic dimensions and exploring how these layers intersect with, complement, and sometimes challenge national identities. Rather than presenting identity as a fixed category, the lecture frames it as a dynamic process shaped by everyday academic experience. Drawing on findings from the UkraStud project, it explores how inclusive practices, fair treatment, and positive peer interaction contribute to Ukrainian students' sense of belonging and strengthen their connection to European identity. In doing so, the lecture establishes a foundation for understanding how universities function as key spaces for identity formation and social integration.

European identity is a multifaceted concept that plays a central role in higher education, student mobility, and inclusion. For students, particularly those from Ukraine, European identity is not a predefined label but an experience shaped through daily academic life, interactions, and social engagement. It encompasses cultural, political, and civic dimensions. The cultural dimension includes shared heritage, arts, history, philosophical foundations, and cultural practices that define European societies and educational traditions. The political dimension reflects the values promoted by European institutions, such as democracy, human rights, justice, equality, and the rule of law. The civic dimension relates to citizens' rights and responsibilities, including mobility, access to education, and participation in democratic processes. While these dimensions overlap, they are distinct, and their interplay makes European identity a complex concept. In the academic context, it becomes tangible through students' lived experiences of inclusion, fairness, and respect.

European and national identities are complementary rather than oppositional. Students can simultaneously maintain a strong sense of national identity and develop a European sense of belonging. This complementarity is particularly important for Ukrainian students navigating rapid social, political, and personal changes. Supporting both national and European identification can enhance students' sense of stability and inclusion in new academic environments.

The UkraStud project examined European identity from a psychological perspective, focusing on factors that influence students' sense of belonging. Key findings include:

- positive intergroup contact with host-country students predicts more favorable attitudes toward both the host population and other European groups.
- Ukrainian students who experience meaningful interactions, inclusion, and support show stronger identification with Europe.
- participation in academic and social activities enhances comfort, confidence, and engagement, which supports identification with broader communities.



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- experiencing respect, fairness, and transparency in academic settings reinforces students' connection to European values.

Tutors are central to shaping students' everyday academic experiences. Their communication, expectations, and relational style influence students' inclusion, recognition, respect, and personal agency. For Ukrainian students, whose identity may be affected by displacement, uncertainty, or conflict, the tutor's role is especially significant. European identity becomes tangible when students experience:

- fair and transparent assessment practices
- open dialogue and opportunities for participation
- respect for diversity in academic and social interactions

Tutors do not teach European identity as a theoretical concept; rather, they embody it through consistent practice and modeling in their interactions and mentorship. By applying inclusive practices and supporting positive peer engagement, tutors help students integrate European values into their daily academic life, enhancing well-being and belonging.

2. Core Values of the European Union: Practical Strategies for Tutors Supporting Ukrainian Students

The six core values of the European Union—**human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights**—form the foundation of inclusive, participatory, and socially cohesive academic communities. These principles, defined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, provide the normative framework within which universities operate and shape expectations of fairness, respect, and equal opportunity. Understanding how such values translate into everyday academic life is essential for creating environments in which all students can thrive.

European values become tangible through daily interactions, transparent procedures, and inclusive teaching practices. Meaningful peer contact, supportive communication, and the absence of discrimination play a central role in fostering student well-being and a sense of belonging. Findings from the UkraStud project show that students who experience dignity, fairness, and participation in their academic environment report higher levels of comfort, confidence, and engagement.

These elements are particularly significant for Ukrainian students adapting to new academic settings. Consistent experiences of respect, clarity, and inclusion help strengthen their sense of stability and connection to the wider European academic community. When tutors model these values through everyday practices—such as transparent assessment, open dialogue, and recognition of diverse perspectives—students are better able to integrate, participate, and develop a meaningful sense of belonging.



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Human dignity recognizes the inherent worth of every individual. In a university setting, this means treating students with respect, listening attentively, acknowledging diverse experiences, and

providing space for students' voices. Avoiding assumptions and prejudice ensures that all students feel valued. UkraStud findings show that students who feel included and engage in positive interactions with peers and staff report higher well-being and a stronger sense of European identification. Dignity is reinforced through everyday academic moments, from one-on-one consultations to group discussions.

Freedom encompasses academic freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought. Tutors foster freedom by encouraging open dialogue, allowing students to share multiple perspectives, and supporting them in expressing uncertainty or disagreement. For Ukrainian students, particularly those from restrictive or stressful environments, experiencing freedom in academic settings is critical for adjustment, confidence, and overall well-being.

In higher education, **democracy** involves active participation rather than solely political engagement. This includes involving students in decisions about courses and activities, collecting feedback and incorporating it into planning, and co-creating learning opportunities with students. By enabling students to have a voice in academic matters, tutors help strengthen a sense of belonging and promote psychological well-being, as highlighted by UkraStud research.

Equality means fair treatment, equal opportunities, and justice. In practice, this includes transparent grading, clear expectations, accessible learning materials for multilingual students, and consistent academic procedures. Research demonstrates that exclusion or negative interactions can decrease well-being, emphasizing the importance of promoting equality and constructive collaboration within academic communities.

The rule of law in academic contexts is expressed through predictable and transparent procedures, fair decision-making, and accessible complaint processes. Consistent application of rules fosters trust, reduces anxiety, and allows students to engage fully without fear of unfair treatment.

Relevant **human rights** in higher education include the right to education, protection from discrimination, academic freedom, access to support services, and the right to safety. For students who may carry the burdens of conflict or displacement, such as many Ukrainian students, these rights are crucial to feeling secure, supported, and able to participate fully.

Students internalize EU values through experience rather than through documents. Every interaction — whether it is a consultation, assessment, or group activity — communicates messages about respect, participation, fairness, and inclusion. Tutors are the primary interpreters of EU values in academic settings. Small, deliberate actions can make a significant impact, such as:

- clarifying assessment criteria to strengthen equality
- co-creating learning activities to reinforce democratic participation
- encouraging open discussion to support freedom and dignity



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By embedding these values into daily practice, tutors help students experience European principles as part of their academic life, fostering a supportive environment, inclusion, and a stronger sense of belonging.

3. Diversity and Inclusion in the European Union

Inclusion becomes a meaningful academic practice when it is embedded in everyday interactions rather than treated as an abstract ideal. Students perceive inclusion through the ways tutors, peers, and university staff communicate, structure learning, and encourage participation. Positive interactions, accessible teaching, and supportive communication all contribute to a sense of well-being and belonging, as confirmed by methodologically robust findings from the UkraStud project.

When students experience clear explanations, respectful dialogue, and opportunities to engage without fear of judgment, they are more likely to feel psychologically safe and socially connected. Inclusive practices—such as providing accessible materials, checking understanding without criticism, and acknowledging diverse experiences—play a particularly important role for Ukrainian students navigating unfamiliar academic environments. UkraStud findings consistently show that students who encounter supportive and inclusive approaches report higher levels of psychological and social well-being, greater confidence, and stronger engagement with the academic community.

Key areas where tutors can promote inclusion include:

- **clear and supportive communication** - explaining academic concepts clearly, checking understanding without judgment, and providing written summaries of lessons and key materials. Clear communication reduces anxiety and builds confidence, especially for students studying in a non-native language.
- **accessible learning materials** - ensuring slides, notes, and summaries are available in advance, using structured formats, and providing materials in English or other relevant languages where possible. Accessible materials support participation and enhance student well-being.
- **psychologically safe learning environments** - encouraging questions without judgment, normalizing uncertainty, recognizing challenging transitions, and modeling respect and appreciation. Students who feel safe are more willing to collaborate, share opinions, and engage actively.
- **awareness of individual needs** - avoiding assumptions and stereotypes based on nationality, language, or academic background, and recognizing that some challenges may be invisible.

Small, consistent actions can have a strong impact on fostering inclusion and belonging. Examples include correctly pronouncing names, respecting time zones in online meetings, providing consistent and constructive feedback, and acknowledging cultural differences in participation. By integrating these strategies into daily teaching and mentoring, tutors translate inclusive principles into



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lived experience. UkraStud findings demonstrate that students who perceive high levels of inclusion report greater engagement, confidence, and connection to the wider European academic community. Intentional, low-

barrier inclusive practices reinforce student well-being and foster a sense of belonging in higher education.

4. European Citizenship and Its Benefits

European citizenship in higher education extends far beyond its legal definition. It represents a shared cultural and political space shaped by common values, historical experiences, and a commitment to cooperation across borders. Within universities, this form of citizenship is expressed through the principles that guide institutional life and the expectations placed on academic communities. The core values of the European Union—human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights—form the foundation of this shared framework and influence how universities understand their role in society.

Students encounter European citizenship not primarily through formal documents but through the broader environment in which they study. The way institutions structure their responsibilities, uphold fairness, and ensure transparency communicates what it means to belong to a European academic community. For many Ukrainian students entering higher education during periods of disruption or displacement, these values offer a sense of orientation and stability. Experiencing predictable procedures, respectful treatment, and opportunities to participate helps them build trust in their new surroundings and strengthens their connection to the wider European context.

Human dignity becomes meaningful when students feel that their perspectives and experiences are taken seriously and that they are recognized as individuals with inherent worth. Freedom is reflected in the encouragement of independent thought, open discussion, and the ability to form and express personal viewpoints. Democracy is visible in opportunities for students to contribute to shaping their learning environment and to participate in collective decision-making processes. Equality is upheld when expectations are clear, procedures are fair, and all students have access to the same opportunities to succeed. The rule of law is experienced through consistency, predictability, and transparency in institutional processes, which reduces uncertainty and fosters trust. Human rights are supported when students feel safe, protected from discrimination, and able to access the support they need to participate fully in academic life.

These values shape the broader culture of higher education and influence how students understand their place within the European project. Tutors contribute to this process not only through their direct interactions with students but also through the way they embody the principles that underpin European citizenship. Their reliability, fairness, and openness signal to students what it



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means to be part of a community grounded in shared values. For Ukrainian students, who may be navigating unfamiliar academic norms or recovering from experiences of instability, such consistency can be particularly meaningful.

Integrating European citizenship into higher education does not depend on formal instruction about EU institutions or legal frameworks. It emerges through the overall climate of the university, the coherence of its procedures, and the values reflected in its academic culture. When students experience dignity, fairness, and participation as part of their everyday academic life, European citizenship becomes a lived reality rather than an abstract concept. This strengthens their sense of belonging, supports their well-being, and encourages engagement with the wider European community.

5. Belonging and Well-being in the EU Context

A strong sense of well-being and inclusion plays a crucial role in shaping how Ukrainian students experience belonging within the university environment. When students feel supported, understood, and able to participate without fear of judgment, they are more likely to engage academically and socially. Tutors have a particularly important influence in this process, as their communication style, clarity, and relational approach can significantly affect students' psychological comfort and confidence. Creating a safe and predictable environment, encouraging constructive peer interactions, and offering steady guidance all contribute to a more positive academic experience.

Findings from the UkraStud project show that students who feel respected, heard, and taken seriously by tutors report higher levels of well-being, stronger motivation, and greater academic engagement. Even small, intentional actions—such as acknowledging effort, responding consistently, or showing openness to questions—can lead to measurable improvements in students' sense of stability and connection. For Ukrainian students, who may be navigating unfamiliar academic norms or coping with the effects of displacement, these gestures carry particular weight. Feeling recognized and supported helps them build trust in their new environment and strengthens their sense of belonging within the wider European academic community.

Keyways tutors can foster well-being and inclusion include:

- providing clarity and predictability
- creating relational safety
- encouraging positive peer interactions
- monitoring and supporting students

Providing clarity and predictability helps students navigate academic expectations and reduces stress. This means giving clear instructions, structured schedules, and transparent assessment criteria.



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Tutors can support students by sharing weekly schedules, learning objectives, and evaluation standards, as well as explaining changes promptly and providing reasons for decisions. Reducing uncertainty allows students to feel more confident, less anxious, and better prepared to engage fully. Creating relational safety ensures that students feel comfortable asking questions, acknowledging uncertainty, and seeking help without fear of judgment. Tutors foster relational safety by openly inviting

questions and discussion, acknowledging the challenges students face in new academic and cultural environments, and responding consistently and respectfully. When students experience relational safety, they are more willing to participate, collaborate, and take academic risks, which strengthens their sense of belonging.

Encouraging positive interactions among students reinforces social inclusion. Tutors can facilitate supportive peer relationships by organizing collaborative tasks and group projects, promoting peer learning in mixed groups, and modeling respectful communication. Positive peer interactions not only reduce stress but also enhance students' connection to the academic community.

Monitoring and supporting students involves recognizing subtle signs of stress or disengagement, such as missed meetings, reduced participation, or withdrawal. Tutors can provide guidance and support through gentle check-ins, offering information or flexible assistance, and small gestures of encouragement to prevent escalation of difficulties.

Fostering well-being and inclusion requires small, consistent actions integrated into everyday academic practice. Clear communication, relational safety, and facilitation of positive peer interactions help students thrive academically and socially, strengthening their engagement and sense of belonging within the university community. Tutors are central to creating this supportive environment and embodying respect, inclusion, and care in every interaction.

6. Ukrainian Students and the European Future

Supporting Ukrainian students in European higher education requires a clear understanding of the academic, social, and emotional transitions they navigate upon entering a new system. Many students face substantial changes as they adapt to unfamiliar teaching styles, institutional expectations, and social norms. These transitions can influence their confidence, engagement, and academic performance, making the role of tutors especially significant. Clear communication, structured expectations, and reliable support contribute to a sense of stability and belonging, which in turn strengthens students' motivation and capacity to participate fully in academic life.

Academic orientation encompasses the skills and knowledge students need to progress successfully from enrolment to graduation. Understanding expectations, managing responsibilities, and completing tasks with confidence are central components of this process. Tutors can play a decisive role by



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offering clear instructions, explaining assessment criteria, providing examples of well-prepared work, making materials available in advance, and checking understanding in a supportive and non-judgmental manner. These forms of guidance help students navigate the academic environment more effectively and reduce uncertainty, which is particularly important for those adjusting to a new educational system.

Findings from the UkraStud project show that students who experience respect and supportive communication from staff report higher levels of well-being and stronger academic engagement. Structured guidance and inclusive policies enhance both psychological and social well-being, reinforcing students' sense of competence and belonging. Social inclusion further contributes to this process. When students have opportunities to collaborate, learn from one another, and participate in mixed groups, they develop positive peer relationships that support both academic and personal adjustment. Activities such as group projects, peer-learning tasks, and short interactive exercises help create a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation.

UkraStud findings indicate that positive contact with local and other European students is common, while negative contact is rare. Such interactions foster openness, strengthen European identification, and contribute to overall well-being. Although tutors are not mental health professionals, their daily interactions significantly shape students' emotional experience. Demonstrating empathy, normalizing uncertainty, and recognizing early signs of stress can make a meaningful difference. Noticing reduced participation, missed sessions, or signs of withdrawal allows tutors to offer timely guidance or small gestures of support that prevent difficulties from escalating.

Positive tutor–student interactions also reinforce engagement. When communication is clear, tasks are structured, and effort is acknowledged, students feel more capable and included. Simple expressions of support—such as breaking down complex tasks, affirming contributions, or offering step-by-step clarification—can strengthen students' confidence and motivation. Consistent strategies such as providing clear academic guidance, fostering a safe and inclusive communication environment, encouraging interaction among students, monitoring early signs of stress, and recognizing effort all contribute to a more supportive and engaging academic experience.

These practices demonstrate that respectful, consistent, and inclusive approaches not only promote well-being and engagement but also strengthen students' connection to the broader European academic community. Tutors play a central role in shaping an environment in which Ukrainian students feel supported, respected, and able to envision their place within Europe's shared future.

7. Combating Stereotypes and Euroscepticism



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Stereotypes and Euroscepticism present significant challenges within contemporary European higher education, making informed and respectful dialogue essential for fostering constructive engagement. For many Ukrainian students, navigating differing narratives about Europe and the European Union can be particularly complex, especially when these narratives intersect with personal experiences of conflict, displacement, or political uncertainty. Tutors play an important role in helping students distinguish facts from assumptions, question common misconceptions, and approach sensitive topics with openness and critical awareness. By encouraging discussions grounded in evidence,

European values, and concrete examples, tutors help students build confidence, develop analytical skills, and engage more meaningfully with the wider European context. Such dialogue not only supports academic growth but also strengthens students' sense of belonging within a diverse and evolving European community.

Understanding how students form attitudes about the European Union and how misconceptions arise allows tutors to facilitate reflection, correct inaccurate information, and strengthen students' sense of belonging based on knowledge rather than stereotypes. Stereotypes are simplified, often inaccurate beliefs that influence how students interpret political institutions, cultures, and identities. Euroscepticism refers to a skeptical or critical stance toward the European Union, its institutions, policies, and level of centralization. It may range from mild uncertainty to political disagreement but does not necessarily indicate hostility toward the EU.

Tutors' role is to support informed, respectful dialogue, rather than to persuade. This includes helping students:

- express uncertainty about EU-related issues.
- distinguish facts from assumptions.
- recognize when concerns are influenced by personal experience, stress, or unfamiliarity with EU structures.

UkraStud research, although not designed to measure stereotypes or Euroscepticism directly, clearly shows that positive intergroup contact strongly shapes how students perceive Europe and the European Union. Ukrainian students frequently report constructive interactions with local peers and students from other European countries, while negative encounters are rare. Such positive contact encourages openness toward European identity and reduces reliance on simplified narratives or misconceptions.

Despite this, students may still encounter common stereotypes about the EU—for example, the idea that the Union is merely a bureaucratic structure, that smaller or economically weaker countries do not benefit from membership, that EU institutions impose rules without listening, or that the EU has little relevance for everyday student life. These beliefs often arise from limited information, second-hand



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opinions, or political and emotional experiences shaped by students' home contexts. In these situations, tutors play an important role in helping students distinguish between factual information and assumptions. Encouraging students to clarify their views, offering concrete examples of how EU policies affect higher education and student mobility, and linking discussions to shared European values can help students develop a more nuanced understanding. When tutors approach these conversations without judgment and promote critical thinking rather than cynicism, students feel more comfortable exploring complex topics and reassessing their initial impressions. Everyday communication practices also matter: open dialogue, respect for diverse perspectives, and a willingness to address uncertainty create an environment in which misconceptions can be examined constructively.

Through such approaches, students gradually build greater confidence in their understanding of Europe, develop a stronger sense of belonging within the university community, and engage more actively with European institutions and values. Short, structured discussions grounded in facts and shared principles can meaningfully strengthen students' knowledge, motivation, and connection to the broader European context.

8. Participating in the European Project

Supporting Ukrainian students in understanding and engaging with opportunities offered through European projects is an important part of their integration into European higher education. Participation in these initiatives goes far beyond political involvement. It includes academic mobility, civic engagement, intercultural collaboration, and contributing to shared European values. For many Ukrainian students, such participation provides stability, new opportunities, a sense of belonging, and a hopeful outlook on the future.

European projects are built on cooperation and shared principles, and students can take part in them in many different ways. Academic exchanges, volunteering, intercultural dialogue, involvement in student organizations, democratic participation, and cross-border collaboration all represent meaningful forms of engagement. However, many students are not fully aware of the range of opportunities available to them, such as Erasmus+ mobility programs, the European Solidarity Corps, or EU research and innovation initiatives that welcome young participants. Tutors play a crucial role in making these pathways visible. By offering clear guidance and explaining how to take the first steps, they help students navigate unfamiliar systems and build the confidence needed to participate.

Engagement often begins with small, manageable actions. Joining a study group, taking part in a bilingual activity, attending an intercultural workshop, or submitting a short project idea can serve as accessible entry points. These initial steps become more meaningful when students see how they connect to their own values. Many Ukrainian students place high importance on democracy, equality,



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and cooperation, and they are more motivated when they recognize these principles reflected in European programs. Transparency in institutional procedures further supports participation. When expectations, criteria, and processes are clearly explained, students feel more secure and capable of taking initiative.

Peer networks also play a significant role. Connections with international students, local organizations, and civic or cultural groups help Ukrainian students build community and develop a sense of shared purpose. Tutors can encourage these connections by pointing students toward relevant groups, events, or collaborative opportunities.

Participation in European projects strengthens both skills and identity. UkraStud research shows that supportive academic environments enhance student well-being, which in turn encourages initiative, confidence, and a sense of contribution. As students become more familiar with opportunities and feel more secure in their academic surroundings, they gradually shift from observers to active participants. This transition is especially important for Ukrainian students who may be navigating uncertainty, relocation, or identity changes.

Tutors can facilitate this process by introducing students to relevant opportunities, sharing their own experiences with European projects, and helping students identify their strengths and interests. Inviting former participants to share practical insights, discussing which aspects of European initiatives resonate most with students, and offering guidance during application processes all contribute to a more supportive environment.

Even small, deliberate actions can have a measurable impact. When tutors help students engage with European initiatives, they enable them to experience European values in practice and foster a deeper sense of well-being, belonging, and long-term engagement.

9. Building Solidarity: Ukraine and the EU

Solidarity between Ukrainian students and their peers in European universities is most powerful when understood as a lived, everyday practice rather than a political statement. It emerges through meaningful interactions, academic clarity, respectful communication, and structured opportunities for students to engage with one another. Research insights show that when students experience dignity, predictability, and supportive peer contact, their sense of belonging and well-being strengthens significantly. Tutors play an important role in shaping these conditions. Through consistent, inclusive practices, they help reduce isolation, encourage mutual understanding, and contribute to long-term social cohesion and European integration.

Solidarity is one of the fundamental principles of European values, but it is not built through political declarations; it grows through everyday relationships. In an academic environment, solidarity



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emerges when students feel seen, respected, and included. This lesson explores how tutors and academic staff can contribute to building solidarity with Ukrainian students in practical, research-informed ways.

In an educational context, solidarity means recognizing the challenges Ukrainian students face, creating environments that support dignity, autonomy, and wellbeing, and encouraging relationships based on mutual respect. It also involves fostering a sense of belonging to the wider European academic community. Solidarity does not require political interpretation; it requires interpersonal commitment and daily engagement.

Findings from the UkraStud research show that frequent and meaningful interactions with local students and staff significantly increase Ukrainian students' comfort and engagement in academic life. In practice, solidarity most often grows out of small, everyday experiences rather than abstract

discussions. At the same time, stress and uncertainty linked to adapting to new academic procedures can make connection more difficult. When tutors provide clear guidance and personal support, students are better able to develop a sense of inclusion and belonging.

Tutors play an important role in creating a safe and trusting relationship with students. Active listening, acknowledging concerns, and avoiding assumptions about political views or emotional states help students feel secure. A simple message such as, "I'm here to support your learning — tell me what you need," can strongly reinforce a sense of solidarity. Academic clarity further strengthens this feeling: transparent assessment criteria, clearly explained weekly expectations, and step-by-step instructions for assignments create a predictable environment in which students can engage more confidently.

Solidarity also develops through structured interaction among students. When tutors design mixed-group activities, encourage peer mentoring, and promote collaborative learning, isolation decreases and a sense of belonging grows. Respect for dignity in everyday practice is equally important. Addressing students by name, recognizing their contributions, and ensuring respectful classroom dialogue communicate that they are valued members of the academic community.

Solidarity has broader importance for European integration. It supports the idea that people from different backgrounds can learn and grow together. Academic communities that practice solidarity reduce stereotypes, strengthen resilience and shared values, and contribute to long-term social cohesion. In this sense, universities become small-scale models of European cooperation.

To conclude the lesson, choose one concrete solidarity-building practice to implement this month. This might involve introducing a short structured peer-support activity, improving the clarity of assignment instructions, intentionally highlighting the contributions of international students, or paying closer attention to students who seem overwhelmed. Small but consistent actions gradually build strong networks of solidarity.

10. Education as a Tool for Promoting EU Values



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Education is presented as a powerful tool for promoting EU values such as dignity, equality, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Students internalize these values not through abstract explanations, but through everyday academic practices—respectful communication, transparent assessment, inclusive dialogue, and fair procedures. Innovative teaching methods enable tutors to model EU values in practice, strengthening Ukrainian students' well-being, sense of security, and sense of belonging within the European academic community.

Education is often the place where EU values — dignity, equality, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law — move from abstract ideas to lived experience. For students, these values become meaningful only when they are encountered in everyday academic life. Teaching is therefore not just a

space for transmitting knowledge; it functions as a laboratory in which values are practiced, modeled, and gradually internalized.

Research consistently shows that young people do not learn values from documents or slogans. They learn them from how they are treated, how conflicts are resolved, whether their voices are heard and taken seriously, and from their sense of fairness and transparency within the academic process. Students who feel respected and taken seriously report higher levels of well-being, and well-being is strongly linked to positive academic experiences. In short, values are learned through practice, not through explanation alone.

Tutors can weave EU values into everyday teaching. Values such as dignity and respect become tangible when tutors communicate respectfully, acknowledge questions, avoid public criticism, recognize diverse experiences, and refrain from making assumptions about Ukrainian students' political or emotional situations. Respectful communication has a measurable impact on student well-being.

Fairness and the rule of law can be practiced through transparent assessment, clear deadlines, consistent procedures, examples of quality work, and explanations of the reasoning behind academic rules. When processes are transparent, students experience the rule of law in action rather than only hearing about it.

Academic spaces can also model democratic values by encouraging open and respectful discussion, including diverse perspectives, allowing students to influence topics or methods, and using structured dialogue tools such as fishbowl discussions, rotating moderators, or reflective circles. These practices simulate democratic participation on a small scale.

In addition to these foundational practices, tutors can integrate contemporary teaching methods that indirectly promote EU values. Scenario-based learning invites students to discuss realistic dilemmas related to dignity, fairness, or inclusion — for example, conflicts in group work or misunderstandings in feedback — helping them connect problem solving with core values. Short



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“Values Labs,” lasting five to ten minutes, ask students to reflect on a concrete experience of fairness or unfairness and its effect on motivation, requiring minimal preparation but producing strong engagement.

Microlearning cards focused on EU values encourage students to link abstract principles with course content through guiding questions about dignity or fairness in a given task. Peer reflection circles give each student equal speaking time in small groups, allowing them to practice equality in action. Role-play and perspective-taking exercises simulate situations such as disagreements in teamwork and help students rehearse respectful communication, empathy, and conflict resolution.

Digital tools, including virtual reality or interactive applications, can immerse students in multiple perspectives — for example, navigating diversity on campus — strengthening empathy and intercultural understanding. Transparent teaching approaches, such as the TILT method, clarify the purpose of assignments, the skills being developed, and their relevance, reinforcing trust and a sense of procedural fairness.

These practices are particularly important for Ukrainian students. Many arrive under heightened stress, face uncertainty about academic norms, and may have limited familiarity with EU institutional structures, while strongly valuing democratic and human-rights principles. When tutors consistently model EU values in daily teaching, students experience safety, respect, inclusion, clarity, and fairness. This directly supports their well-being and strengthens their sense of belonging within the European academic community.

As a practical next step, choose one innovative method to try this month. This could be a short Values Lab, a brief scenario-based discussion, a more transparent explanation of an assignment, or a structured peer reflection activity. Even small, intentional interventions help make EU values visible, tangible, and meaningful in students’ everyday learning.

11. Stories of Inclusion and Success

Real-life examples of successful inclusion offer valuable insight into how Ukrainian students can thrive within European universities. These cases illustrate which tutor actions most effectively support students’ well-being, integration, and academic achievement, and they highlight practical approaches that can be replicated across different institutional contexts. By examining concrete situations in which students felt welcomed, respected, and academically supported, it becomes clear how everyday practices contribute to creating learning environments where Ukrainian students can participate confidently and develop a strong sense of belonging.

Across European universities, many Ukrainian students are rebuilding their academic lives in the midst of uncertainty and stress. Although every individual journey is different, research — including findings from the UkraStud project — shows consistent patterns in what helps students adapt and thrive. This



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script focuses on practical examples of inclusion, the tutor behaviors that made those successes possible, and how similar approaches can be integrated into everyday teaching practice.

Success stories are valuable because they translate inclusion from theory into practice. They provide concrete models for tutors, offer Ukrainian students a sense of hope and orientation, and contribute to a shared narrative of belonging. Most importantly, they demonstrate that inclusion is rarely the result of large institutional reforms. It is built through many small, consistent actions.

While the UkraStud research did not collect formal narrative case studies, it identified several conditions strongly associated with positive experiences among Ukrainian international students in Croatia, Italy, Romania, and Turkey. Respectful treatment, clear academic guidance, and meaningful positive interactions with peers and staff emerged as the central pillars supporting both academic success and social integration.

Several typical practice-based scenarios illustrate how inclusion can unfold in everyday settings. In one case, a Ukrainian student hesitated to participate in class discussions. Her tutor recognized this and encouraged her privately after a seminar, explaining that her perspective would enrich the group. The tutor then introduced structured speaking turns so that each student had equal time to contribute. Gradually, the student began to participate more actively, her confidence increased, and peers responded positively. This example shows that when students feel their voices matter, their well-being and engagement improve.

Another scenario involved a student who struggled with an early assignment because expectations were unclear. A tutor redesigned the assignment using the TILT framework, clarifying its purpose, the task itself, the criteria for success, and providing an example of high-quality work. As a result, the student's stress decreased, performance improved, and the student reported feeling more in control of the learning process. Academic clarity directly reduces uncertainty and supports adjustment.

In a third example, a university paired newly arrived students with volunteer peer mentors. Through brief weekly check-ins, mentors helped with learning platforms, academic resources, and informal social integration. One student who participated in this program later joined a student organization and developed strong peer networks. Positive contact with local peers significantly increased comfort and well-being.

A final example highlights the impact of empathy. During an exam period, a tutor noticed signs of exhaustion in a student and initiated a supportive conversation about workload planning. Together they created a manageable weekly schedule. Following this intervention, missed deadlines decreased, well-being improved, and the student felt recognized and supported. Feeling supported strengthens both personal resilience and a sense of connection to the broader European academic space.

Across these varied situations, successful inclusion stories share common elements. Tutors notice small signals such as withdrawal or confusion and respond early. They provide clarity that reduces



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uncertainty. They actively facilitate positive peer interaction through structured collaboration. Above all, they communicate dignity and respect by listening carefully and acknowledging student contributions. These behaviors are simple, but their impact can be profound.

Tutors can intentionally create similar success stories in their own classrooms. Structured turn-taking can ensure balanced participation. A brief follow-up conversation after the first assignment can clarify expectations. Pairing international students with peer mentors fosters connection. Transparent grading rubrics build trust. Short reflective moments connected to values such as dignity or fairness deepen engagement. Early check-ins with overwhelmed students prevent small difficulties from becoming major obstacles. Although particularly relevant for Ukrainian students, these strategies benefit all learners who may be vulnerable.

As a practical step forward, tutors are encouraged to select one concrete action to implement this month: noticing and responding to a student's quiet struggle, redesigning an assignment for clarity,

facilitating a structured peer interaction, or sharing a positive inclusion story with colleagues. Inclusion grows from everyday professional choices, and tutors play a central role in shaping those choices.

12. How to Promote European Identity and Values among Peers

Practical strategies for fostering European identity and shared values among peers are explored through a focus on supportive environments, positive peer interactions, and respectful communication. These elements contribute to student well-being and to a stronger sense of European identification. Tutors are introduced to concrete ways of encouraging value-based engagement in everyday academic life.

Promoting European identity is not a matter of persuasion or political messaging. It begins with creating academic environments in which students experience dignity, fairness, respect, and belonging — the foundations of the European project. In such environments, students do not simply hear about values; they live them in their daily interactions with peers. This script presents practical ways tutors can structure learning spaces so that students themselves spread and reinforce these values within their peer groups.

Research shows that European identity develops most strongly when students experience positive peer contact, fair treatment, respectful communication, a sense of belonging, and overall well-being. These factors are deeply interconnected. When students feel included and treated fairly, they are more open to collaboration and more likely to identify with a shared community that extends beyond national boundaries.

Peers often influence identity formation more powerfully than formal instruction. Interactions among students carry authenticity and trust because they arise from shared lived experience. Students learn what European values mean not from theoretical explanations, but from how group work feels, how



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disagreements are handled, whether everyone has a voice, and how diversity is treated in practice. In this sense, peer culture becomes a central space where identity is shaped.

The tutor's role is not to instruct students to adopt a particular identity. Instead, tutors create structures that allow students to experience and transmit values to one another. One effective approach is organizing structured equal-voice discussions, where students speak in timed rotations. This simple format models democracy, equality, and dignity by ensuring balanced participation.

Reflection activities can also make values visible. Short peer conversations prompted by questions about fairness, inclusion, or dignity encourage students to articulate their experiences and recognize values in everyday situations. Pairing international and local students through peer mentoring strengthens positive contact, which research identifies as a key predictor of comfort, engagement, and identification with the academic community.

Assignments that focus on “values in action” invite students to share concrete examples of fairness, respect, equality, or solidarity from their daily academic lives. Similarly, brief group problem-solving

scenarios — such as resolving unequal participation or responding to a disrespectful comment — allow students to practice applying principles related to equality, human rights, and procedural fairness. Peer-led micro-presentations, in which students briefly present a value and a real-life example, further reinforce learning through social modeling.

Small peer rituals can also strengthen belonging. Practices such as expressing appreciation before group work, summarizing a peer's idea before disagreeing, or rotating group roles cultivate habits of mutual respect and dignity. These repeated interactions gradually establish shared norms that support a collective sense of identity.

European identity is not imposed from above. It grows through shared experiences, shared values, and participation in supportive communities. When students repeatedly encounter fairness, respect, and inclusion in their peer interactions, these principles become part of how they understand themselves within a broader European context.

Tutors can begin reinforcing these processes immediately through small adjustments: adding a short values reflection at the start of a seminar, inviting students to share examples of fairness in group work, designing mixed peer activities that encourage positive contact, clarifying assignment criteria, and teaching collaborative structures that ensure equal participation. Each of these steps embeds values into everyday practice.

As a practical next step, tutors are encouraged to select one peer-based activity to implement this month — an equal-voice discussion, a short paired reflection on values, a collaborative scenario exercise, a peer mentoring initiative, or a brief sharing of values in action. Consistent small actions help students experience and promote European values in ways that feel natural, authentic, and collaborative.



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