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Electronic contact (E-contact) as a strategy to improve intergroup attitudes

LESSON 10



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Perceptions of Inclusion, well-being and Identification
with
the European Union in Ukrainian university students

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What is E-contact?



E-contact refers to positive and structured online interactions between people from different social or cultural groups (e.g., students from different cultures or religions collaborating in a chat or video call)

(White & Abu-Rayya, 2012; White et al., 2020)

E-contact is based on the principles of direct intergroup contact, but it occurs online through digital technologies, such as:

- email
- video calls
- chat groups
- online collaborative projects

These interactions allow people who might not normally meet to connect and discover common ground.

E-contact



Why is it important?

When students move to a new country, language barriers, anxiety, or cultural differences can make face-to-face contact difficult. E-contact provides a safe and comfortable space to start interacting.

Example

- WhatsApp or Telegram groups for mixed teams
- Online study groups with Ukrainian and local students

These online spaces can **reduce the initial sense of distance**, helping students feel more comfortable **before meeting in person**



Evidence on the effects of E-contact

Studies show that E-contact:

- Improves outgroup attitudes (White & Abu-Rayya, 2012);
- Reduces prejudice and intergroup anxiety (White et al., 2018);
- Increases willingness for future direct contact (Boccanfuso et al., 2020).

These findings show that digital contact can work even in divided or sensitive contexts, when face-to-face meetings are not easy.



Thank you

Any Question?

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