



# Volunteering and mentoring as prosocial strategies for professional training of a future physical education teacher

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Dr. Hab., Associate Professor **E.I. Eroshenkova**<sup>1</sup>Dr. Hab., Professor **I.F. Isaev**<sup>1</sup>PhD, Associate Professor **D.I. Mikhaylova**<sup>1</sup>PhD, Associate Professor **S.I. Tarasova**<sup>1</sup>Postgraduate student **Yu.I. Gorbatenko**<sup>1</sup><sup>1</sup>Belgorod State National Research University, BelgorodCorresponding author: [eroshenkova@bsu.edu.ru](mailto:eroshenkova@bsu.edu.ru)

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** was to identifying the experience and prospects for including prosocial strategies of volunteering and mentoring in the professional training of future physical education teachers.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The online survey method «Prosocial strategies in teacher training» was used (E.I. Eroshenkova, D.I. Mikhaylova). The sample consisted of 67 students of 1-4 years of study at the Faculty of Physical Education of Belgorod State National Research University.

**Results and conclusions.** Multidirectional university experience in volunteering and mentoring at the faculty was identified. A number of prospects and recommendations for the implementation of prosocial strategies in the professional training of future physical education teachers have been identified: 1) inclusion of students in volunteer practice; 2) providing students with a variety of volunteering experiences; 3) support for traditional and alternative mentoring at the university; 4) expanding the boundaries of pedagogical mentoring and correlating it with the needs of the individual, family, state and society.

**Keywords:** *prosocial behavior, prosocial strategies, volunteering, mentoring, future teacher, physical education.*

**Introduction.** The ongoing changes in the world order and the determination of value priorities in various areas of the development of society, science and production coincided with the period declared in the Russian Federation, the year of the teacher and mentor (2023). In our opinion, this is due not only to the need to increase the prestige of the teaching profession, but also to an awareness of the role of teachers and mentors in long-term goal setting, education, development and formation of professionals, responsible citizens and patriots of the Motherland. In this regard, there is a rethinking of the teacher's mission as an ambassador of Russian traditional national spiritual and moral values and as a specialist in subject areas, in particular in the field of physical culture and sports. It is physical education teachers who have special potential in nurturing a culture of health in modern students, in shaping their value attitude towards a healthy lifestyle, readiness for physical activity of various types

for the benefit of the individual, family, society and the state.

A long-term vision of the results of a teacher's work determines the need to clarify goals, revise the content, forms and methods of professional training of future physical education teachers. One of the tools in solving these problems is to involve students in various types of volunteer practices through mentoring and other prosocial strategies (voluntary, aimed at the benefit and benefit of society) [2].

**Objective of the study** was to identifying the experience and prospects for including prosocial strategies of volunteering and mentoring in the professional training of future physical education teachers.

**Methods and structure of the study.** The theoretical basis of the study was the work of scientists in the field of organizing prosocial pedagogical education [1], volunteering practices [3] and mentoring [4]. Reliance on the methodology of the prosocial ap-



proach [1] in the analysis of the identified works made it possible to identify key aspects that formed the basis for conducting an online survey.

The questionnaire "Prosocial strategies in teacher training" (E.I. Eroshenkova, D.I. Mikhailova) included two sets of questions to identify: 1) experience of including students in various types of prosocial volunteer activities; 2) facts of mentoring in relation to students in their professional development by other subjects of the university. The study, which was conducted in April-May 2023, involved 463 students from six faculties of the Pedagogical Institute of the Belgorod State National Research University (BelSU). The sample for the purposes of the article consisted of 67 students (41 boys and 26 girls) of the 1st-4th years of study at the Faculty of Physical Education of the National Research University «BelSU». Data analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excell.

**Results of the study and discussion.** As a result of conducting an online survey on the above sample, results were obtained for two blocks of questions. Within the 1st block, the question «Did you have to participate in any helping or volunteer activities during your studies at the university?» Results were obtained indicating that 95.5% of respondents acquired similar experience at the university. Moreover, when analyzing the answers to the question about the consistency and frequency of participation in this kind of prosocial practices, incl. on helping other people, practices of patronage, tutoring, volunteering, volunteering, etc., it was found that only 6,58% of students «participate often, on an ongoing basis»; «participate to a sufficient extent» – 25%; «sometimes» – 41,6%. The remaining students – 23,68% – either «rarely participate» in volunteering or «almost never». In terms of the direction and content of volunteer activities, future physical education teachers are involved more often and have relevant experience in such areas of volunteering as: sports – 33,13%; social – 21,88%; pedagogical – 16,25%; patriotic – 13,75%; environmental – 5%; event-based – 9,38%; corporate – 0,61%.

Unfortunately, the university practically does not involve future physical education teachers (according to the respondents answers) in cultural, inclusive volunteering. In addition, as the results of the study showed, respondents do not have volunteering experience in the field of supporting public safety, media and animal volunteering. No one chose the «other» option with the possibility of specifying the direction of volunteering.

Despite the small gaps identified based on the data obtained, we believe that future physical education teachers receive a fairly diverse pedagogical, prosocial, and strategically significant experience.

In order to determine the prospects in the designated context, let us turn to the idea of O.A. Polyushkevich that «volunteering and volunteerism at the moment is a socially approved strategy of behavior, serving as a kind of resource, social capital for subsequent social, personal, professional development» [3, 50 p.]. Such a resource is important in the professional development of future teachers and is considered by us as one of the effective long-term prosocial strategies.

The indicated strategy, as the study showed, correlates with interaction with «significant others» and is reinforced when implementing various types of mentoring at a university. Analysis of respondents answers to the second block of the questionnaire made it possible to identify the main subjects of mentoring activities carried out in relation to future physical education teachers. In accordance with the respondents answers, these include (in order of importance): student group supervisor – 26,67%; classmates – 23,08%; subject teacher/trainer – 14,36%; dean – 10,77%; scientific supervisor – 9,23; head of the graduating department – 8,21%; Deputy Dean – 6,15%; psychologist – 1,54%.

Note that the distribution of results obtained on this issue at other faculties has significant differences. For the Faculty of Physical Education, the leading answer options relative to other faculties were the supervisor of a student group (in one of the faculties the values were closer, but lower); head of the department (values are 2-2,5 times higher than other faculties); dean (at three more faculties the values were close, but had a lower indicator).

Analysis of the data obtained, observation, understanding of the specifics of the Faculty of Physical Culture of the National Research University «BelSU», its traditions, pro-social strategies led us to the conclusion about the importance of the mentors personality, his personal experience and example (traditional mentoring); as well as the role of alternative mentoring with the possibility of interaction «with a change of roles», «without hierarchy», «without strict boundaries» [4, 141 p.] on involving students in professionally significant, volunteer and other types of socially useful, socially approved activities. We believe that such experience should be



considered as one of the necessary practices and prospects in the preparation of a future physical education teacher.

Continuing the study to identify the mentoring functions of the designated subjects, their focus was determined: educational – 33,33%; educational – 22,67%; sociocultural – 18%; professionally oriented – 11,33%; research – 8%; design – 5,33%; the other – 1,33%. The «other» option suggested versions – health-oriented, moral-volitional. Analysis of the answers, their interpretation in the context of building prospects in the training of professional students, allows us to draw a conclusion, which is confirmed in the study of D.A. Stepanova: «mentoring is a complex process of interaction between two or more subjects, without clear boundaries, associated with professional and personal development» [4, 139 p.].

Studying the specifics and content of mentoring in professional development, the majority of students (95,5%) noted that they associate mentoring with pedagogical assistance and support. To a greater extent, students need emotional (29,85%) and organizational (20,9%) support; mentors provide more informational (23,88%) and intellectual (22,39%) support. Based on the data obtained, it is advisable to correlate mentoring practices with the needs of the individual, family, state and society.

**Conclusions.** Thus, the identification of multidirectional experiences of volunteering and mentoring using the example of one of the faculties of a regional university made it possible to identify a number of prospects and recommendations for including the indicated strategies in the professional training of future physical education teachers:

- 1) inclusion of all students in volunteer practice;
- 2) developing students diverse experience of volunteering as a socially approved strategy of behavior

and a resource for social, personal, and professional development;

- 3) support for traditional and alternative mentoring practices;

- 4) expanding the boundaries of pedagogical mentoring and correlating them with the needs of the individual, family, state and society.

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