



Revista Estomatológica Herediana

ISSN: 1019-4355

ISSN: 2225-7616

faest.revista@oficinas-upch.pe

Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia

Perú

Saravia-Rojas, Miguel Á.; Sueng-Navarrete, Lola; Geng-Vivanco, Rocio
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Revista Estomatológica Herediana, vol. 35, no. 2, 2025, April-June, pp. 185-186
Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia
Lima, Perú

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20453/reh.v35i2.5521>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=421582899013>

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Educational coaching in dentistry teaching

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Received: August 13, 2024

Accepted: January 14, 2025

Online: June 30, 2025



Open access article

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Dear editor:

Coaching is a discipline centered on self-awareness, motivation, and personal as well as professional development. It involves a facilitator, known as a coach, who works alongside the participant, or coachee, using conversation as the main tool to promote learning from a non-directive stance. This approach entails establishing a solid foundation, co-creating the relationship with the coachee, communicating effectively, facilitating learning, and creating a safe space (1).

In the educational field, coaching has proven to be an effective strategy. In Peru, Sánchez et al. (2) implemented it among secondary school students who faced social challenges and lacked clarity in developing personal life projects. The results showed significant improvements in self-regulated learning and educational development. Likewise, Cárdenas et al. (3) proposed a coaching program aimed at improving the professional performance of secondary school teachers, highlighting its potential to enhance pedagogical skills and strengthen teaching practice.

In dentistry, educational coaching is emerging as a valuable methodology. The process involves regular meetings between students and a coach, during which goals and strategies are established to overcome challenges (4). This approach fosters adaptability, reflection, and professional self-regulation, empowering students to identify and address their own strengths and weaknesses (4, 5).

Among the advantages of educational coaching, its capacity to promote comprehensive development stands out, as it fosters both technical competencies and soft skills essential for professional practice. Moreover, it enables personalized learning by tailoring guidance to each student's specific needs. This approach also encourages autonomy, encouraging students make informed and responsible decisions, resulting in more confident and competent professionals (4-6).

However, certain disadvantages are associated with educational coaching. Its implementation may require additional resources such as time, trained

Cite as:

Saravia-Rojas MÁ, Sueng-Navarrete L, Geng-Vivanco R. Educational coaching in dentistry teaching. Rev Estomatol Herediana. 2025; 35(2): 159-160. DOI: 10.20453/reh.v35i2.5671

personnel, and adequate tools, which can represent a financial burden. Additionally, students might become overly dependent on their coaches, limiting their capacity for independent action. Resistance to change—from both students and educators—can also hinder the adoption of this methodology (4-6).

In dentistry, educational coaching presents several opportunities. It allows for the integration of more holistic and student-centered approaches. Academic performance can also be improved, as this method focuses on each student's individual needs. Furthermore, this strategy can strengthen professional competencies, preparing students to face the demands of the professional world (4-6).

Nevertheless, there are challenges associated with this approach. Continuous and specialized training for coaches is required to ensure the quality of the coaching process. Another challenge lies in integrating this methodology into the curriculum, which involves designing a model aligned with educational objectives and feasible within the institutional framework. Finally, ensuring the long-term sustainability of such programs remains an issue, as it demands ongoing resources and consistent institutional commitment (4-6).

In conclusion, educational coaching in dental education offers significant advantages that can transform the teaching-learning process, making it more personalized, motivating, and effective. However, its implementation entails important challenges that demand proper management. With appropriate planning and execution, this approach can become a powerful tool for preparing future dentists with the competencies needed to face the challenges of the professional world.

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