Clinical Case Conceptualization Skill Development and Counseling Pedagogy:
A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study

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Abstract
Clinical case conceptualization has been identified as an invaluable and indispensable skill within the literature of the mental health professions and by the Council for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, the counseling profession’s professional accreditation body). Despite its known importance, there is a dearth of literature focused on understanding the experiences students have related to counselor education pedagogy and the development of clinical case conceptualization skills. This project utilized a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) qualitative research design and analysis to explore the clinical case conceptualization learning experiences had by Counselors-In-Training (CITs) enrolled in CACREP aligned or CACREP accredited master-level counselor education programs. A total of 13 semi-structured interviews (with 9 participants) were conducted to learn more about the CITs learning experiences. The findings of this study yielded three categories of learning experiences (i.e., academic experience, clinical clarity, and confidence), a host of subcategories, and the theory of pedagogical intentionality. Findings, limitations, and implications for counselor educators as well as the counseling profession, and areas for continued research, are presented and discussed.

Keywords: counselor educators, counselor educator pedagogy, clinical case conceptualization, clinical case formulation, constructivist grounded theory, CACREP

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