The purpose of the current study was to explore the experiences of doctoral students in counselor education and supervision who taught a master’s counseling course as instructor of record. A descriptive phenomenological methodology (Giorgi, 2009) was selected for this study to create a description of the experience of the participants.

Twelve counselor education and supervision doctoral students from 10 universities in 8 states participated in primary and follow-up interviews during which they described their experiences teaching master’s counseling courses as instructor of record. The structural description of the experience of teaching a master’s counseling course as instructor of record was:

Participants assumed a responsibility that required faculty support for access to resources and guidance with teaching tasks (faculty support). As participants engaged in instructional activities, they assumed a leadership role in the classroom that, for some, challenged their sense of confidence in their abilities (leadership and personal growth). As the semester progressed, participants prioritized creating an interactive classroom environment (e.g., real-world, application focused activities) where master’s students co-created their learning experience, and their formal and informal feedback (e.g., student
surveys, journal posts) influenced participants’ pedagogical decisions and teaching style (classroom culture). As participants assessed their students’ performance, they identified and addressed deficits as indicated in the course requirements, and the standards of professional and ethical practice in the counseling profession (gatekeeping). Participants felt more confident in their decision about their career in counselor education (professional identity) after teaching a master’s counseling course as instructor of record.