



Each month we spotlight several College of Education Faculty Mentors for you to get to know better. Our wonderful professors and instructors in **Education, Psychology & Counseling, and Health & Kinesiology** are here for you!

What is a Faculty Mentor?

A Faculty Mentor can be any NSU professor or instructor. Faculty mentors have in-depth knowledge of their field and are the best resource for expanding students' understanding of their discipline.

Faculty Mentors are your go-to for help with:

- Expanding knowledge within your major
- Career exploration and advice
- Internship opportunities
- Research opportunities
- Future academic pursuits
- Graduate programs

How do I find a Faculty Mentor?

Assigned Faculty Mentor

All students are assigned a Faculty Mentor when you declare a major. You can find who your assigned mentor is at the top of your degree audit ([Degree Works](#)) in the section labeled "Advisors".

Faculty Mentor for Field of Interest

Any NSU professor or instructor can serve as your Faculty Mentor, even if they are not assigned to you. Each faculty has an area of expertise that may be better suited for helping you with your specific future goals. Talk with your professors, assigned Faculty Mentor, or [Academic Advisor](#) about finding the right Faculty Mentor for you.

Need tips on how to connect with professors? Check out the tips & resources sections at the bottom!

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Dr. Christy Reed

Associate Professor

Department Chair, Curriculum & Instruction

Broken Arrow Education 156
 (918) 449-6535
 reed70@nsuok.edu



Teaching → 16 years

At NSU → 1.5 years

Field Expertise / Research Interests

- Early Childhood Education
- Elementary Education
- Reading
- English Language Learners

EDUCATION

- * Master in Education, *Fort Hays State University*
- * Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction, *Texas Tech University*

Personal hobbies & interests → I love spending time with my family, traveling, and I love to scrapbook when I have time.

What drew you to your field?

I had some great teachers while I was in school who inspired me, and I have always loved teaching others and working with children.

Favorite course to teach

My favorite course to teach is ECED 4113/5113 Creative Expressions. I love teaching this course because it helps students realize that creativity in the classroom is important! We do hands-on activities in this class and share different ideas. I love that my students have a chance to step out of their "boxes" and do not have to worry about if something is done "right."

Who had the biggest impact on your educational experience?

My favorite high school teacher, Mrs. Miles, had the biggest impact on my educational experience. She was my math teacher who made all of the material easy to understand. She was very caring and patient with her students.

What do you tell students who don't know what to do with their major?

I would recommend the student talk to his/her faculty mentor. Faculty mentors are here to help guide students and provide information. Also, don't rush through the program! Everyone wants to be finished and become a teacher, but it is so important for students to retain the course information in order to pass the state assessments. Worksheets aren't the only way to teach! :) Not every art piece, construction, or drawing has to look exactly like everyone else! Let children be creative!

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Dr. Samantha Benn-Duke

Assistant Professor

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 bennduke@nsuok.edu



Teaching → 30 years

At NSU → 5 years

Field Expertise / Research Interests

- Education of Native American students
- Preparation of teacher candidates in working with minority students
- Diversity and social justice
- Curriculum development
- Trauma-informed teaching

EDUCATION

- * B.A. English Education
Northeastern State University
- * M.Ed. School Administration,
Northeastern State University
- * Ph.D. Curriculum Studies,
Oklahoma State University

Personal hobbies & interests → I love spending time with my grandbabies and making them laugh. I also enjoy reading and family time.

What drew you to your field?

I knew from the first day of kindergarten that I would be a teacher. I attended Tahlequah's first kindergarten class in public school, which was a half day. I had stayed home with my physically disabled father prior to that. I knew from the first day that school was a place I wanted to be.

Favorite course to teach

I can't really pin it down to just one, but one that I always particularly enjoy is ELED 4563, classroom management and curriculum. This is the last course that students take, in conjunction with Pre II, before their full internship. We have great discussions with students who are one big step away from being educators in their own classes. I enjoy the discourse and the highly relevant questions that students bring to class.

Who had the biggest impact on your educational experience?

I can't name one particular educator, but in my school experiences, I liked almost all of my teachers. My favorites were probably some who taught language arts and vocal music.

What do you tell students who don't know what to do with their major?

I would encourage students to pursue a position at a school that they feel would be a good fit for them; for example, someone who attended small rural schools might be more comfortable teaching in a similar setting. I would also encourage them to participate in all kind of professional development possible. There is so much information and so many resources available to teachers that we cannot possibly provide it all. It's important that our students who become educators understand that teaching will never be a position that allows for stagnation. Ongoing growth is necessary for effective educators at all levels.

Advice for students

Have a sense of humor and use it in the classroom! Allow your students to see who you are, and make jokes on their levels. Many of us learn well when we are enjoying ourselves.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP (Graduate)

Dr. Maria Gray

Associate Professor

Broken Arrow Education 145
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 christ32@nsuok.edu



Teaching → 19 years

At NSU → 5 years

Field Expertise / Research Interests

- Technology in Education
- Online Learning, Leadership
- English and the Language Arts
- Women in Education

EDUCATION

- * B.A. English, *Northeastern State University*
- * M.S. College Teaching,
Northeastern State University
- * Ed.D. Higher Education Administration, *Oklahoma State University*

Personal hobbies & interests

I enjoy writing fiction, making jewelry and crocheting. I love the "salt life" and would lounge near the ocean every day if possible.

What drew you to your field?

I enjoy sharing knowledge and gaining knowledge from people, so I always knew I wanted to teach.

Favorite course to teach

EDUC 5113, Ethics and Legal Aspects of Leadership is my favorite course. It is a great place to analyze the impact leaders have on society and the perfect opportunity to challenge our perceptions about leadership, ethics, decision-making, and legal aspects in everyday life.

Who had the biggest impact on your educational experience?

Aside from my parents who always encourage me, a professor in my doctoral program at Oklahoma State University had an amazing impact on my educational experience. To this day I quote her. She said, "When you forget what it's like to be a student, you lose your effectiveness to teach." So every teachable moment I remind myself that we are all students, learning from and teaching each other.

What do you tell students who don't know what to do with their major?

Network! It is so important to make professional connections with people. Students can gain so much by talking with other people, learning their interests, and discovering paths to their careers.

Advice for students

Whether it is for an assignment or a work-related situation, I often tell students to break it down into smaller pieces. Avoid focusing only on the entirety of the project/assignment etc., and separate it into smaller, manageable tasks. That way once you complete a task, checkmark it. The once overwhelming project/assignment will be completed with less stress.

Tips on How to Connect with Professors

- ✓ **Introduce yourself** → Whether it's after class or via email, introducing yourself is a great first step to connecting with professors.
- ✓ **Attend their office hours** → It may seem intimidating to stop by a professor's office, but office hours are the time they set aside specifically for students to visit with them outside of class. Office hours are posted on their doors, in syllabi, or you can request via email.
- ✓ **Go to class** → **Always be prepared** → **Participate** → **Display respect**
- ✓ **Get involved** → Ask your professors about any organization/honor societies to join. Professors often sponsor these, so it is another great way to get more connected to them.
- ✓ **Ask them questions** → How did they get into their field? Were they ever lost college students? What can you do with your major? What can you do to prepare for life after graduation? The sky is the limit!

NSU Resources

College of Education

- [Education Department](#)
- [Psychology & Counseling Department](#)
- [Health & Kinesiology Department](#)
- [Academic Advisors](#)

Career Services

- [Career & Major Advice](#)
- [What can I do with a major in...?](#)

Student Resources

- [MY NSU](#)
- [go NSU](#)
- [Degree Audit](#)

Other Resources

YouTube

- [Top Mistakes Students Make - Not Visiting your Professor During Office Hours](#)
- [How to get to know your Professors better!](#)
- [How faculty mentors can help first-generation students succeed](#)
- [Developing Professor Relationships](#)

Articles

- [The Importance of Building Relationships with your Professors](#)
- [Guides to Communicating with Professors](#)
- [How to Build a Strong Relationship with your Professor](#)

Are you a faculty mentor that would like to be featured? Submit your info here!