I started off doing my mentoring project at the Model Elementary After School Program. When I went for the first time on February 27, they sent me to work with the middle school kids. I was a little nervous and reluctant to work with kids at this age, but when I got there, there was only about five of them at the program for the day. I asked what I could do to help, but the kids didn’t want any help on anything. We sat in the cafeteria for about thirty minutes, and then we went to the gymnasium where they could play basketball or do whatever else they wanted in there until their parents came to get them. I didn’t do much that day but watch the kids play and talk to one little girl that was sitting on the side doing her homework. I left feeling like I hadn’t accomplished anything, so I decided that I was going to do the rest of my mentoring at a school at home during my spring break.

My good friend’s mom, Karen Buchanan, just retired last year from a long career in teaching. When a teacher at Adams Elementary School in Hamilton, Ohio had to have serious surgery in February of this year, the school called Mrs. Buchanan to see if she would consider taking a job as a long-term sub until the regular teacher could come back. Mrs. Buchanan told me that she would be teaching a class called “reading center” that she taught for many years at another elementary school, Jefferson Elementary. Reading center is designed for children that are having difficulties with reading and English skills. I thought that this would be a great opportunity for me to do my mentoring project because I could help children on a one-on-one basis.

On average, I visited the class for around two hours each day for five days. Mrs. Buchanan was in a regular classroom of her own where different groups of children from all elementary grades would come in throughout the day for reading center. I was usually there after lunch when the first and second grade kids would come in. A common
activity that we would do with the kids was to put them in small groups and give them a book to read. Each child would take a turn reading a sentence. This was fun because I was able to read along with the kids and encourage them on how well they were doing. I think that is a major reason that I decided to become a teacher because I love to make the children feel good about themselves and what they have accomplished. The children also had to read stories on their own and answer questions at the end. This was an activity that the children needed help with a lot, so I got to work with children even more when they did this.

Other than working with the kids one-on-one, I also helped Mrs. Buchanan grade tests that the kids were given on punctuation, grammar, and reading. A basic test would usually give two examples of a sentence and ask the student to choose the one that was correct. After we graded these, we would go over them together and show the children where they made their mistakes.

When I got back from spring break, I still had a little over two hours to complete. Since I had already been to the Model After School Program, I went back there to complete my hours. I did this in two different days. On my first day back, I was sent to the auditorium to work with preschool and kindergarten kids. I was told to help a little girl named Coy with her handwriting. She was really sweet and cute. I helped her work on two different worksheets and then we did a puzzle until it was time for me to leave. On the second and last day that I was back, I was sent out to the playground to play with kids of all ages. The whole time, all I did was push one little boy on a swing. I would not recommend this program for people that want to get a good experience with mentoring.

I am glad that I got this opportunity to work with Mrs. Buchanan and with students that were having difficulties with reading and English because it gave me the faith in myself that I could sit down with a child and help them understand a concept that they didn’t understand before. I think that it also confirmed my decision to teach a primary
level such as 1st or 2nd grade because I loved working with this age group.