I began my mentoring project on February 1, 2002 at Johnson County Middle School. Each Monday and Tuesday the school has extended school services (ESS) to provide tutoring with homework, portfolios, or any area the student may need additional help. I go to Johnson County almost every weekend and attend classes at Eastern on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The supervising teacher was Mika Crum, a seventh-grade special needs teacher.

Mrs. Crum introduced me to the 6 students in the classroom and pointed out a student that needed help with her homework for a health class. I helped her make a 5-day menu using the four food groups. It was fun at first but it got harder when we tried to think of different foods toward the end of the week.

Two weeks later I came back on February 15. I helped the same girl with another health assignment. She had to summarize an article on tobacco use, and I helped her point out the key issues of the article. As she began the rough draft, I helped her with grammar as she wrote.

The following Monday, February 18, I helped another seventh-grader with homework. His English class was reading The Tell Tale Heart and I helped him answer questions. It had been a while since I had read the story, so I read it while he started on the questions.

On Friday, March 1, Mrs. Crum asked me if I wanted to help a student who was behind in math. Math is definitely my weakness, but I agreed. He was adding and subtracting positive and negative integers. We worked problems on a worksheet but also did some problems on the computer. I returned on Monday and I tutored the same student plus another one. I thought the math software was really useful and fun. I think I actually helped these two students!

March 15 was a hectic day because they had planned to dismiss tutoring because the girls basketball team was playing in the regional championships. They had a pep rally during the last period, but had decided to go ahead and have ESS. The students were a little pepped up and didn’t want to work. I can understand why when I began helping a student with worksheets containing sentences that needed to be broken down into parts of speech. I had forgotten what a gerund was! Luckily, she also had a list of parts of speech that I looked over.

The following Monday, March 18 was the best part of my mentoring project. Two students and I worked on geography software on the computer. It showed a picture of an individual state. You had to name the state, capital, and also the abbreviation. I think I learned as much as they did because this was also something that I was a little rusty on.

On March 29, I helped a student answer questions on Red Scarf Girl, and also helped him again with Call of the Wild.

April 15 was the last day of ESS. We had a pizza party in our classroom to celebrate.