My mentoring project took place in --------. I was assigned to work with an eight year old female named Gabrielle. Her home life has been especially troublesome for a child. During our first visit I learned that her father had left the family in January of this year. She tried pretending it was no big deal but I knew it had to be extremely difficult for a child. At our first visit we read a book, played a game but mostly we got to know each other. She was very articulate about her home life during that visit but in subsequent visits she did not have as much to say. I believe that she had been told not to speak of her home life to me because I could not even get her to talk of her brothers and sisters.

I tried to spend two hours a week with Gabrielle. Our visits would start at 8:00 a.m. on both Monday and Wednesday morning and would last until 9:00 a.m. When I would arrive at the school I would go to Gabrielle’s classroom and get her. We would then go to the family resource center. These visits were troublesome for me because I did not clearly understand what my role was to be. During many of our visits all Gabrielle wanted to do was color, play games such as checkers or build with Tinker Toys. Sometimes she would want to play the reading games on the computer, but only the easy ones. Occasionally, we would read but most of the time she would tire of reading and pawn it off on me. Sometimes I would try to pep her up and force her to read but this never seemed to work.

My first hours with Gabrielle were uncertain for me. I did not fully understand my role and I did not believe we were making a connection. There were two weeks in which I did not get to visit because of the statewide testing. It was during this absence I decided I would visit Gabrielle a couple more times and then fulfill my hours in a block
observation period. When I met with Gabrielle for the first time after our two week separation I realized my visits did mean a lot for her. It was at this visit she gave me a stuffed bunny. I thought she was just showing it to me but when I tried to give it back. She said “No, it is yours. I got it for you.” She also quizzed me pretty hard on where I had been for two weeks. I don’t think she really understood it was her testing that had caused the absence. Never in any of the other visits had she asked me when I would be back. On this visit she did. She wanted to make sure that I came back and she wanted to know when.

I am troubled that this project is coming to a conclusion. I feel as though I am abandoning Gabrielle. I wish there was a way that I could stay in touch with her. I believe she needs someone stable in her life. Though I feel I am leaving Gabrielle prematurely I did learn a great lesson. I hope I will never under estimate my value or my impact on a child. I expect to carry this lesson with me through out my career. I hope I will remember Gabrielle, the little girl who never really seemed to care.