As I began thinking about this semester and my practicum experience I did not know what to think. I wondered where I would be interning and what sort of experiences I would have. Some of those questions were answered early on, before the experience ever began. During the summer, months prior to the practicum, I had the opportunity to assist the director of Valley Christian Academy with a project he was working on updating computers for the coming school year. It was at this time that I inquired about the possibility of completing my practicum experience at the school. Dale Moncrief, the director, agreed to let me complete my practicum there.

A few months before the semester was to begin, Dale and I began to flesh out the areas that I would be concentrating on. We finally settled on six different areas or domains, each with its own priority level. The level was determined by; one, the requirements given by KSU; two, the areas in which I wanted to gain experience, and three, the areas that Dale thought would be beneficial for me to experience. It is from these domains that my daily responsibilities were drawn. The domains consisted of the following: classroom instruction, faculty training, hardware trouble-shooting, networking, purchasing, and software. It is from within each of these domains that my daily schedule was formed. Dale and I decided that all day Friday would work best for me to be at VCA. I was able to observe and teach seventh grade, sixth grade and two first grade classes on those days. During the time that I was not in the classroom I would help with the hardware trouble-shooting that needed to be done.

My classroom experience has been a good one. Although I worked mostly with sixth, seventh and first grade classes, I think that I have had good exposure to different age groups. I worked with a third grade one day observing the teacher and helping the kids with the flowchart project they were working on. As part of the collaborative project, I worked with the fifth grade students creating a multimedia presentation in Movie Maker. I have had great opportunity to watch others teach technology and to teach it myself. When I began the internship the school was beginning its third quarter. I observed the teachers teach the flowchart project for that quarter. I then taught the project for the next quarter, which was a PowerPoint presentation. I was able to hold a computer club that

met after school for eight weeks. The children in the club learned how to create a movie with Movie Maker. First the children learned how to take good photographs, what makes a good picture and how to edit photos with Adobe Photoshop Elements. We learned about adding filter effects in photos and enhancing pictures. The children learned about constructing a movie with effects and transitions and how those affect the timeline of the movie. They learned how to add audio to a movie and how to adjust images to fit the timing of the music. I also enjoyed the challenge of teaching a group of peers and colleagues.   I spent a few weeks preparing materials and presented faculty training on the topic of "virtual field trips".   The session went ok, but I felt I could have done better. After debriefing with Dale, I realized that I could have done a better job at getting the group engaged in the lesson and help to make the topic more applicable to them. One suggestion that Dale had was to begin by asking more open-ended questions. For example, at one point I asked if any of the teachers had utilized virtual field trips in their classes. A few had, but I neglected to ask them about the experience, if they thought it was worthwhile, etc. Another method that I could have used to "engage the audience" would have been to compare and contrast real versus virtual field trips and examine the pros and cons of each. I think I received a well-rounded technology teaching experience during this internship.

I desired to see the difference between teaching technology in an elementary setting compared to a secondary educational setting. Through his network of contacts, Dale was able to set up a visitation at Cuyahoga Valley Christian Academy. This school houses about 850 students from grades seven to twelve. I met with Kim Beavers, one of the technology teachers at the school. She teaches Accounting, Web Design, Computer Applications and Concepts I & II. During the visit I was also able to the Graphics Arts and the Yearbook classes. The students in these classes work with the Adobe Suite of tools including InDesign and Photoshop. I was able to spend some time with Matt Riordan, the school's network administrator, and discuss some of the schools networking infrastructure and the day-to-day workings in the technology department. The school has a contract with Dell and Apple that updates their hardware every three years. All of their hardware and trouble-shooting is done in house. The school has six computer labs: one

dedicated for teachers to bring classes to, another teaching lab in which there is a tech person available to assist teachers, one in the library, two classroom labs and a Mac lab. I enjoyed this visit, seeing the different applications the students were learning, and meeting the very capable staff at CVCA.

The technology situation VCA is a unique one in that it is a private, Christian school; there is no district. Because of that, Dale has built or builds all of the computers that the staff and students use. One of the highlights of this experience for me was to have the opportunity to research, price and build a computer from the ground up. Dale provided me with some websites to begin looking for all the parts that I would need. We sat down and he showed me how he goes about researching the different parts and the methodology behind why he searches for the items in a particular order. After that it was up to me to research and find, "the most for the least". After I had finished researching I submitted the list of items to Dale for his approval. I ordered the parts waited for them to arrive and then was able to assemble them. The build process took a couple hours. In order to make sure that all of the pieces would "talk" to one another Dale and I attached them together and connected a monitor to the mother board. We had success. At that point I disassembled everything and then re-assembled it all inside the case that I had purchased. Everything worked well and the machine worked at a fast speed. After I finished assembly I proceeded to load the drivers, operating system and utilities. I finally configured the machine for the teacher that is to receive it this summer. This experience was a fun one for me and valuable also. I found that I could build a machine for about two-hundred and fifty dollars. Whether or not I can use this skill in a school will depend greatly on how technology is managed. Some schools (like CVCA) have agreements with a computer company (Dell, Microsoft, and/or Apple) in which the computers are updated every three or so years. Most computers wouldn't, or shouldn't, have major problems with them in that amount of time. All in all, having the opportunity to build a quality machine from paper to parts was a valuable and enjoyable experience.

The day to day hardware troubleshooting was a meaningful experience as well. Some of the instances of technology issues that the teachers were experiencing were as simple as a

loose plug or a plug in the wrong socket. Others had larger issues such as a failing power

supply or a hard drive that was full. When I was not in the classroom I spent time in the

tech room loading and configuring computers. This meant that I would clean the hard

drive of any information, check to see that the computer had sufficient memory, connect

the computer to the network, map all the drives available and then load all of the software

that the teacher or student would need.

I did do some work on the network. This was mostly data entry as I was changing the

teacher's passwords from "password" to something that they had created. I had to

change the password in three places: on the school server, the school website and at the

teacher's individual machine in their e-mail client. I think that all of the various activities

afforded a glimpse into the life of a technology person at a school.

I particularly enjoyed and was challenged by the required collaboration with a teacher

from the school. As a trained music educator, I desired to explore using technology in

connection to that subject area. The music teacher at the school, Suellen DeMattia, was a

great person to work with. We collaborated well. We met and brainstormed different

projects that we might like to do. Once the idea for the project gelled, we set about

completing the different pieces of the project. What we proposed to do was to create a

multimedia presentation. We chose the hymn "How Great Thou Art," as the subject for

the presentation. We then decided that we would have the students create drawings

depicting different phrases or concepts from the hymn which would be scanned and

imported into Movie Maker. After that we wanted to audio and video record the students

singing the hymn. All of this material would be combined into a movie presentation. I

shared this plan with Dale and he suggested some changes. One of the changes that he

suggested was to have the students create PowerPoint slides instead of having them draw

a picture. This would give them the chance to use technology and lessen the workload

for me (as I would not have to scan all the images). We implemented the change and

arranged for the kids to have time in the tech lab. The classroom teachers were very

accommodating. We set about getting all the equipment that we would need and

arranging times to record the kids. The school had a powered mixer that I was able to

connect my laptop to in order to record the audio. We set up four microphones: one for a student violinist, one for the piano and two for the singing children. All of theses were mixed down into a stereo signal that I recorded to my laptop using Audacity. I then used my video camera to take different shots of the kids as they were singing. I took a wide shot, some pan shots and some close-up shots at various angles. All of this material was then captured and imported into Movie Maker. After all the material was imported into Movie Maker I went to the school and showed the students the process of constructing a movie. The kids liked seeing the video of them singing. They pointed out their friends and were generally excited. Due to the time constraints of the project, I was unable to allow each student to try out the program, but did want them to be introduced to the software.

As I look back over the time that I have spent at Valley Christian Academy I think that it is time well spent. I have had the opportunity to gain real-world experience as a technology educator. I am ready to enter the work force and continue learning all that I can about technology and teaching technology. I think that all the goals set at the beginning of the practicum experience have been met. I do not think there would be anything that I would have changed in this experience. I think in a more "normal" school setting in a district I would not have been able to work with hardware the way that I have in this experience. I think that I had appropriate time teaching in the classroom to gain an idea about how teaching technology is different from other teaching I have done in music. I have been able to see that in technology it is imperative for the teacher to have the role of a facilitator rather than the "expert" sharing knowledge. In this area it is very possible that a learner (be it a teacher or student) will know more about a particular technology than I do. It is important to engage the learners and provide them opportunities to use the technology. A phrase that Dale uses is, "Watch me do it, then you do it." This way the learner is given the opportunity to practice what they have observed and then apply it to what they are doing, be it a project in their classroom or at home. This internship has served as a lesson in constructivism. By allowing the learner to use the technology, he or she can form his or he own knowledge about the technology making it more personal and meaningful. This is the sort of educator that I want to be,

allowing the learner create their own understanding and take ownership for their learning, whatever the subject might be. I want to step out of the "expert" role and into the facilitator role. This internship had let me experience that and helped me develop those tools.