Q2

Decision Tree

Parameters as decided by a GridSearchCV:

Criterion = entropy

Max\_depth = 15

Min\_samples\_split = 2

Test accuracy at these values: 0.838565022422

The criterion attribute selects what measure of purity is used when deciding what feature to use to split at each internal node of the decision tree. Entropy means that it is based on the information gain each feature will produce. The max\_depth sets the maximum depth of any leaf node. If purity has not been reached before the max\_depth, it cuts node production off on that branch and predicts the majority class at each leaf node. The min\_samples\_split is similar in that it is a pruning method for the tree, it decides the minimum number of samples needed to split any internal node, higher numbers protect against overfitting but the gridsearch chose the default (and minimum) value of 2 for this dataset.

K Nearest Neighbors

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| K | Train accuracy | Test accuracy |
| 1 | 1.0 | 0.943697060289 |
| 2 | 0.983678507749 | 0.941205779771 |
| 3 | 0.986695926485 | 0.944693572496 |
| 4 | 0.980661089014 | 0.943198804185 |
| 5 | 0.979152379646 | 0.944693572496 |
| 7 | 0.974214785352 | 0.941704035874 |
| 9 | 0.970923055822 | 0.937219730942 |

I would choose a K of 3 because it is tied for the highest accuracy on the test set. It also makes sense that the K is small, because there is relatively low intra-class similarity in this dataset.

This low intra-class similarity is what contributes to such good performance by the KNN technique, as it can classify based on even very small, separated clusters of the same class. Distance weighting, that is, using the whole training set and simply weighting it by how far it is from the point in question, would slow the execution down and not contribute to the accuracy much, if at all. Due to the structure of the dataset I described earlier, it is really only the points close by any given point that are useful.

SVM

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Kernel | C | Degree | Gamma | Accuracy |
| Rbf | 15 |  | 1/p | 0.950174389636 |
| Linear | 1 |  | 1/p | 0.926258096662 |
| poly | 15 | 3 | 1/p | 0.953163926258 |

Theoretically I do think SVM is suited to this problem, as the ability to modulate how you penalize misclassifications can help for the extra noisy samples. Also, we just know that we have more samples than features, and that SVM is a very good general-purpose classifier. For all these reasons I would intuitively agree that a SVM is a good approach.

PCA

KNN

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| K | # PCs | % variance included | Accuracy |
| 3 | 6 | 0.477454341173 | 0.810164424514 |
| 3 | 17 | 0.704020654226 | 0.933233682113 |
| 3 | 25 | 0.77842588674 | 0.946188340807 |
| 3 | 40 | 0.856701859525 | 0.951170901844 |

PCA is a good tactic with KNN because in KNN the closer data points of the same class are to each other relative to other classes the better your predictions will be, and when your axes are built of the features of highest variance, it will theoretically separate different classes from each other more. This is supported because at high PC counts we not only achieve the lower feature count inherent to the PCA technique, we actually are able to classify with better accuracy across our test set than the non-PCA KNN accuracy of 0.944.

SVM

Svm parameters used: kernel=poly, C=15, Degree=3, gamma = 1/p

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| # PCs | % variance included | Accuracy |
| 6 | 0.477454343704 | 0.801694070752 |
| 17 | 0.704020049582 | 0.934728450424 |
| 40 | 0.856701859525 | 0.954160438465 |

PCA increases my test accuracy for SVM, but only by a little bit. I would have expected it to do very well for similar reasons as the KNN. The further you separate the classes (by using high variance axes) the easier it will be to find a wide margin, which is what the SVM is essentially trying to do. Essentially I think PCA is overall a good tactic with this dataset as it can reduce the effect of the (smaller) variances between handwriting and pronounce the larger variances that occur between different numbers.