**600-800 words**

I chose the assignment to edit Wikipedia because I had never done it before and I was curious to see what would happen to my edits should I try. In class, I searched the name of my practicum school and was redirected to the Vancouver School Board’s page. I was surprised to discover that it was very barren. Other than its location, budget, special programs and student population there was virtually nothing else on the page. Wikipedia users had flagged it as problematic because almost all of the information on it comes from a single source, preventing the article from being unbiased.

To improve the article, I decided it was a good idea to include a list of the schools that are in the district, with links to their pages if they had one. I was quite shocked that this had not already been done, so it seemed like an obvious first step. A few days later, I decided to add more, and I was determined to find some information about the district somewhere other than their own website, to bring more credibility to my work. From the Canadian government’s website I found information about the seismic upgrading program that has been prevalent over the last couple of years. I also added a blurb about the controversial, newly adopted transgender policy, which had been detailed on many local newspapers’ websites.

I was surprised to see that people were fixing up my contributions quite instantly. Usually, within the same day, someone had looked at my new additions and cleaned up my formatting. Whatever I had done had “passed the test” because none of my actual writing was removed. I thought my first two contributions would be just fine, but I was worried the policy post would get deleted due to its highly controversial nature. I kept the tone of my writing very neutral, so I think that is why it was accepted.

I felt more comfortable than I thought I would making changes to the page. There is a little bit of formatting involved, but I got the hang of it quickly and then it was a pursuit of information. It was an exciting feeling to see that others had already read my edits and were helping me out with the formatting. I felt a glimmer of pride that they had left what I had written as is. To me, this seemed like positive feedback and I enjoyed that there is an interesting feature in the “history” page where you can click to thank others for editing your edits. I found this really made it feel like I was collaborating with unknown other authors.

Before starting, I visited the talk page for the Vancouver School Board and found it quite interesting. I discovered that the page I selected is related to the “WikiProject Schools” and the “WikiProject Canada”. This means, that there is a collaborative effort going on to make pages for all Canadian schools. Unfortunately, it has been ranked of low-importance. The talk page also pointed out that the School Board’s Wikipedia page is missing a photo. I could not find one using Creative Commons searches, so that will remain in need for now.

I think it would be a very interesting assignment to view, edit and/or create pages in Wikipedia with a classroom. That being said, the students must have strong English skills in order for their work to be accepted, so it might be a good idea to start this with a grade 7 class. It would be a fun idea to create new pages and photos for the remaining elementary schools that do not yet have pages, and contribute to the WikiProjects. This would also be a good eye-opening experience for the students to see before entering high school. It is essential for them to understand that anyone could be writing Wikipedia articles and that the information cannot always be trusted. Wikipedia is an excellent source to get an idea of a topic, but it is not a scholarly reference and should not be treated as such.

Vancouver School Board. (2015, January 31). In *Wikipedia, The Free*

*Encyclopedia*.Retrieved 05:25, February 1, 2015,

from [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vancouver\_School\_Board](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vancouver_School_Board%20%20%20%20%20%20&oldid=645043425)

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