One of my main goals as a future educator would be to ensure I teach in a way that I give each individual child the tools they need to learn. I have found that the lessons that are most memorable for me personally are not those that have simply been read to me by the teacher, but those in which we did a fun activity or were taught the lesson in an interactive manner.

I really value Neil Fleming’s VAK/VARK model, which says that there are four kinds of learners: kinaesthetic/tactile learners, auditory learners, visual learners and reading/writing preference learners. I really value the four ways of learning and respect that students learn in different ways. I believe that in each lesson we give as educators it is important to include each element at least once while showing students something new, as it ensures that each student has an opportunity to learn in the way that they best understand. I believe that the classroom is a place where every child should feel as though their specific learning needs have been met and a place where they are comfortable.

After this class, I realize that another way to achieving a comfortable and happy classroom environment is through mindfulness. In my practicum class, we do Mindup, but now I realize that there is so much more that we can do. Week 4’s mindfulness activity shows us that something as simple as smiling at someone, or taking the time to talk to someone for a minute can do a lot of good. I think that this is true with students as well. One particular child that I used to work with was always having problems with other students. While they weren’t problems that I was able to immediately solve or help with, she told me that she felt so much better after talking because, while the problem still existed, someone had listened to her and justified her feelings.

This also makes me think of “la pleine conscience” that we briefly looked over in class. This is a situation I have seen over and over again in my practicum class: a student who is physically in class, but mentally somewhere completely different. I think one way that I can help this problem is by taking a brain break when students seem to be zoning out, by doing Mindup or going out for a short run.

Personally, even in my post-secondary education, I find that I require less study time in classes where the educator has taken the time to prepare a lesson with their students in mind. For example, in one of my education classes last year, we did a “performative inquiry” in which we had a class discussion about the issue of higher tuition for international students. Each student in the class was given a role to perform, for example, that of a university administrator or a political figure. Although this course was about bringing theatre into education, I learned so much that day, but it didn’t feel like I was learning or working hard to memorize the necessary information because we were having fun by getting into these characters and feeling how they would feel.

I feel like this line really relates to the work we did with “theatre for living”, when we got up from our desks and stood behind whichever person up front we felt a connection to. Activities like these two activities help build empathy because you start thinking about your emotions as well as the emotions that others hold.

This also reminds me of the reading “Knowing, Believing, and Understanding: What Goals for Science Education?” because in during the performative inquiry, as well as theatre for living, you are forced to think about your beliefs as well as the belief of others. For example, I had never really thought about the topic of tuition for international students before doing the performative inquiry. The process of researching and acting in the role of an international students forced me to really think about the financial issues that could come about because of the current laws on tuition increases for international students. There is a line in the article which says “a single claim […] could be called knowledge for one person […] and a belief for another”. In this case, I believed that it was every students choice to go to school internationally and that they knew about all the financial aspects/how expensive it would be. Throughout this experience I discovered that there is no limit on how much tuition can increase per year for international students, so there is really no way of knowing the financial implication from year-to-year (new knowledge which helped change my belief). During our discussion in class, my partner and I were wondering about the difference between belief and knoweldge, and how what I simply believe could be seen as 100% knowledge to another person - I feel as though my experience with performative inquiry is an example of belief vs knowledge.

This is an example of the type of lesson that I would want to bring into my classroom as an educator, as it contains elements that help kinesthetic, auditory, visual and reading/writing preference learners.