

Teacher Education WIIFM

The WIIFM? question is one that appears in teacher education in slightly a different phrasing. There are several students each year who ask why they need to learn teaching and learning theories and not just the how-to. There is a perception that faculties of education (i.e., the “Ivory Tower”) isn’t as great a learning experience as their practicum opportunities because it addresses the theoretical “whys” or teaching. It is from this angle of WIIFM that I suggest the following:

- Practicum is important, but so is theory. You need to know what you’re looking at when you see it modeled to you by your associate teacher.
- When you graduate, you will make your own decisions and those all have some aspect of theory to them.
- If teaching were only how-to and not why, we would be able to replace teachers with robots. Similarly, teaching involves real people in different contexts, so it can be unpredictable. No one teaching action will always work.
- You may choose to take a masters degree for upskilling, salary increase, or entry into administration. An understanding of theory will help you choose a topic of study for a thesis or major project.
- You will eventually be a seasoned teacher, and likely a mentor for a new teacher as a result. Your understanding of why you do what you do will help the next generation of teachers.