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Teachers' talk about worldview dialogues between home and school. A Finnish case-study

Elina Hirvonen [a], Inkeri Rissanen [b], Raili Keränen-Pantsu [c] and Martin Ubani [a]

[a]The School of Applied Educational Science, The School of Theology, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland; [b]Faculty of Education and Culture, Education, Tampere University, Tampere, Finland; [c]School of Applied Educational Science, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland

ABSTRACT

This study explored Finnish basic education teachers' talk about worldview dialogues between teachers and guardians in Nordic, and more specifically in the Finnish context. Applying thematic discourse analysis to data from semi-structured interviews ($N = 5$) of the basic education teachers, we identified two discourses: differing worldviews and value conflicts between school and guardians. Results highlight that, from the teacher's point of view, worldview dialogues with guardians occur as an aberration from the norm. It seems that the discourses can be seen as a reflection of three ideals of Finnish education: normative framework, inclusivity and involvement. The study underscores the need for teachers' intercultural and worldview-related competences and contributes to the discussion on teacher education development, offering insights into the teacher as an intercultural educator.

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Introduction

As the cultural and religious background of pupils in Europe has diversified, teachers' intercultural competence has become a basic requirement. It refers to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in the school (Perry and Southwell 2011). This competence encompasses a range of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable teachers to create inclusive and equitable learning environments and upbringing practices. This involves, for example, understanding and appreciating cultural differences, recognising the impact of one's own cultural identity on teaching practices, and employing culturally responsive pedagogies (see, e.g. Gay 2018; Jokikokko 2010; Romijn, Slot, and Leseman 2021).

In the literature, teachers' intercultural competencies are discussed under various concepts and fields. In the framework of critical intercultural education, the ability to promote equity and social justice is seen as the core of this competence (Dervin 2020; Rissanen, Kuusisto, and McMullen 2023). Promotion of equity entails the ability to recognise different forms of diversity and their susceptibility to marginalisation or discrimination. However, teachers' abilities to engage with religious and worldview diversity is

CONTACT Elina Hirvonen elinhi@student.uef.fi

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a somewhat neglected topic in intercultural education research (Rissanen 2020) and merits more attention.

One key aspect of professional practice for an interculturally competent teacher, particularly in relation to worldviews, has been identified as the development of worldview consciousness through self-reflection (Flanagan 2021). Worldview consciousness can be seen as the awareness of one's own and others belief system, including values, norms, and assumptions, and its influence on personal and professional life. For many teachers, their career commitment is grounded in their values, worldview, and sense of purposefulness (see Häusler et al. 2019; Kuusisto and Tirri 2021;; Tirri and Kuusisto 2022). Teachers contribute to pupils' guidance daily, and this interaction between teacher and pupil cannot be free from beliefs and values (Kohlberg and Hersh 1977; Stroetinga, Leeman, and Veugelers 2018). In Finland, previous research indicates that there are differences in both teachers' orientations towards religion and worldviews (Hirvonen et al. 2021; Kimanen, Alisaari, and Kallioniemi 2019) and in their worldview consciousness (Niemi, Kimanen, and Kallioniemi 2020). Hence, teachers' own relation to worldviews can impact their way of teaching and dealing with worldviews in their work (Flanagan 2021).

Worldview consciousness and reflection are also needed at the school level. The curriculum and school subjects are built on cultural values; thus, educating is never neutral activity (von Brömssen and Graeme 2020). The Finnish public education system is legislated to be non-confessional and impartial regarding religion and worldviews (see Rissanen and Poulter 2023). Teachers are expected to commit to impartiality (Jackson and Everington 2016). This implies that when interacting with parents from diverse worldview backgrounds, teachers are expected to adopt dialogical attitudes and practices. However, teacher education in European contexts, as well as in the US and Canada, has been reported to lack support for developing professional conceptions for addressing religious and non-religious beliefs in school (Rissanen 2019; Soules and Jafralie 2021). Policy and research literature has acknowledged a need for teacher education to support the deconstruction of harmful and reductionist conceptions of religion (and non-religion) in the public space that hinders good professional practice and recognition of religious and belief commitments of pupils and their families in schools (Jackson 2014; OSCE/ODIHIR 2007; Rissanen and Poulter 2023).

In Finland, schools and teachers are responsible for building good and functioning relationships with guardians (Basic Education Act, Section 3, 1998; FNCCBE, 2014) to enhance parental involvement in education. Parental involvement is widely recognised as a key predictor of educational achievement (Koivuhovi et al. 2025; Wilder 2014). However, research from different national contexts has also identified recurring challenges in parent – teacher collaboration. For example, issues concerning child-rearing often remain unaddressed, and teachers may find cooperation difficult when value positions diverge (Stroetinga, Leeman, and Veugelers 2018). Collaboration between schools and parents belonging to cultural minorities is typically hindered by 'deficit discourses' in which parents are deemed hard to reach and lacking cultural capital (Ishimaru et al. 2016). One of the key elements of a good relationship is trust. The trust of, for instance, immigrant parents varies according to how schools and teachers succeed in intercultural relations (Prokic 2024). Teachers are autonomous; hence, their personal attitudes and experiences affect their practices in cooperating with guardians (Helgøy and Homme 2017). Teachers can find collaboration challenging (Bæck 2015; Blomberg 2008),

which leads them to adopt the practices common in their work environment (Blomberg 2008). Also, as Tveit (2014) has noted in the Norwegian context, in student assessment discussions dialogue between teacher and parent rarely occurs even though it has been explicitly set as an ideal.

Studies on teachers' perceptions of worldview-related interactions between teachers and guardians are few. There is research on teachers' attitudes towards worldviews (Lipiäinen, Ubani, and Kallioniemi 2022; Miller and McKenna 2011; P.-M. Niemi, Kimanen, and Kallioniemi 2020; Penthin et al. 2022; Subasi Singh 2022) and the role of worldviews in comprehensive education (Byrne 2014; Gearon et al. 2024), but targeted approaches to studying teacher-parent dialogue focus on cultural diversity (Eberly, Joshi, and Konzal 2007; Henry et al. 2022; Joshi, Eberly, and Konzal 2005) or, for example, school-Muslim family collaboration from the perspective of parental cultural capital (Rissanen 2020).

Previous studies therefore reveal a need for further research in this area. The present research thus explored the discourses of Finnish primary school teachers regarding worldview dialogues (WVD) between school and guardians. Thus, the study employs a data-driven inductive approach, defining WVD based on how teachers describe it in their talk. The research question guiding our study was: *How do Finnish basic education teachers talk about worldview dialogues with guardians?*

Diversity and worldviews in Finnish basic education

In recent years, the Finnish comprehensive school system has faced diversification at many levels, including curricula and pupil backgrounds. Since the 2000s, the Finnish comprehensive school system has garnered praise for its emphasis on equality and equity (OECD 2022). However, the ability of comprehensive schooling to ensure equality has recently faced scrutiny, especially as societal diversity has increased (INVEST Policy Brief, 2023; Mäkelä 2019; OECD 2022).

The Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (FNCCBE) is grounded in humanistic values and human rights (FNCCBE, 2014; Rissanen and Poulter 2023). It mandates ideological neutrality, ensuring that education is politically, ideologically, and religiously impartial. The role of the school is to provide equal education to all students (Basic education act 1998). In Finland, this often leads to a secularist and reductionist interpretation of the role of religion and worldviews in schools (Ubani 2019). Consequently, the Finnish National Agency of Education has issued guidelines for religious education and activities in schools (FNAE 2022). Nevertheless, these guidelines do not address everyday situations intertwined with beliefs. Due to high autonomy of Finnish teachers (Chung 2023), they interpret these guidelines independently and balance them with parental requests. In situations with guardians there are no official guidelines, leaving teachers to develop their own practices for dialogue and solutions concerning questions of religious freedom in school, often with support from principals or other teachers.

Despite official interculturalist policies and ideals, studies repeatedly find monoculturalist and colour-blind practices remaining in Finnish schools (Hummelstedt et al. 2021; Zilliacus, Paulsrud, and Holm 2017). To some extent, multiculturalist discourses have gained prominence, but they typically exclude religion (Rissanen

2019). In the Nordic educational context, 'cultural Protestantism', also referred to as secular Lutheranism, prevails. Finnish basic education is shaped by a Lutheran ethos emerging from a Protestant tradition that emphasises widespread literacy as a civic and moral duty (see H. Niemi and Sinnemäki 2019). This means, for instance, that Protestant conceptions of religion and culture (i.e. religion as a private matter) shape teachers' thinking and practice (Berglund 2017; Rissanen, Ubani, and Sakaranaho 2020). In school, 'cultural Protestantism' can be seen for example as the continuing presence of Christian elements in school festivities – which, however, have also diminished and in some schools been completely replaced with secular features, or accompanied with more diverse cultural and religious elements.

In this research article, we focus on teachers' talk about WVD with guardians. Previous studies apply various terms that come close to WVD. Terms such as inter-religious (Riitaoja and Dervin 2014), inter-faith (McKenna, Ipgrave, and Jackson 2008) and inter-belief dialogue (Kieran 2021) have often been used to refer to interaction involving worldviews in school. WVD has been used in the educational research field as a more inclusive alternative for religion-related dialogue. Use of worldview instead of religion or belief is more vastly demanded from the point of inclusivity of the concept (Freathy and John 2019; Miedema 2014; Riegel and Delling 2019; Valk and Tosun 2016; van der Kooij, de Ruyter, and Miedema 2013). The WVD is seen relating to the elements of every worldview that include the idea of positionality, particularity, and partiality (Riitaoja and Dervin 2014). In addition, it has been perceived to include secular outlooks and lifestyles in the concept of dialogue together with religious beliefs and lived expressions of religions (Poulter and Tosun 2020).

In this paper, we perceive WVD as a meaningful conversation between individuals that aims to increase understanding on existential questions, values, and beliefs. WVD is essential for fostering mutual understanding and respect among individuals from diverse cultural, religious, and philosophical backgrounds (see e.g. Lipiäinen et al. 2022; Poulter and Tosun 2020; Woodhead 2018). WVD can be seen also as collaboration between teachers and guardians regarding upbringing, since the values and beliefs of adults are central to raising children (Stroetinga, Leeman, and Veugelers 2018). While teacher-parent collaboration has been widely studied, research concerning collaboration related to upbringing is not only rare but also difficult to identify due to a lack of common terminology. To narrow this research gap, we aimed to widen the understanding of teachers' perspectives on WVDs with guardians by examining teachers' talk about teacher – parent – interaction regarding worldviews, values and religions by thematic discursive analysis, also paying attention to WVD in upbringing-related conversations.

Data and methods

The data of this study consists of Finnish basic education teachers' semi-structured interviews ($N = 5$) conducted by the first author in the autumn 2021. All the teachers were instructing the same group of 10-year-olds. The first author gathered observational data in the classroom in a two-month period. Information on teachers' own worldview background was not collected. Two of the teachers were class teachers, one was special

education teacher and two subject teachers (Finnish and physical education). Teachers had from three to 30 years of work experience.

The study was conducted according to the guidelines of Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK 2019, 20). In this study all participants are adults that have given their informed consent. Physical integrity was secured; participants have not been exposure to exceptionally strong stimuli. In this study there is no risk of mental harm or endangerment of the safety of participants or researchers. Hence the ethical review is not required.

The thematic discourse analysis (TDA) method was utilised (see, e.g. Botelle and Willott 2020; Clarke 2005; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Taylor and Ussher 2001). TDA is purposed for analysing semi-structured interview data in which participants produce situated accounts. Our aim was to systematically identify thematic patterns with attention to the discursive resources and assumptions in teachers' talk about teacher–guardian interactions (Clarke 2005; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Taylor and Ussher 2001). The analysis began at the textual level. After multiple readings and listenings it became possible to identify sections in the material that specifically addressed the interaction between teachers and guardians regarding worldviews based on inclusive definition of WVD that includes any teacher-guardian encounter in which worldview-related issues were emerging. These sections were extracted from the research material and imported into the Atlas.ti software. Using Atlas.ti, an initial coding was performed on the selected material, focusing on topics of WVD as reported by teachers and the descriptions provided by parents. The coding process was applied to all interview materials and, as new codes emerged, earlier interviews were revisited to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness. Following this, the codes were grouped and labelled. Next, the data were examined for differences and commonalities both within and across code categories. Hence, discourses, i.e. underlying systems of meaning, could be identified.

The analysis was examined from three perspectives. The first focused on the causes of WVDs as articulated by the teachers. The second examined how these causes appear in the teachers' work. Finally, the third viewpoint addressed the dynamics between teacher and guardians in WVDs.

How do teachers talk about worldview dialogues with guardians?

The main finding relating to teachers' talk about WVDs with guardians was that they occur when something unusual takes place in relation to what teachers consider normal with respect to (religious) worldviews, values, and morals. We present two different discourses of these aberrations, namely *differing worldviews* and *conflict of values between school and guardians* (Table 1).

Differing worldviews

In the discourse of differing worldviews, the reason for WVD occurring was the *guardian's relation to religion as* a source of aberration. In this discourse, teachers recognised that guardians' worldviews can be either religious or non-religious. However, guardians' attention was, in either case, focused on aspects related to the content of teaching regarding religion or school customs and practices associated with religion.

Table 1. Teachers' discourses on worldview dialogues with guardians.

Topics	Discourse on differing worldviews	Discourse on conflict of values between school and guardians
Reason for WVD	Guardians' relation to religion as source of aberration.	Conflict of values regarding school vs. home upbringing practices or pupil behaviour as source of aberration.
Appearance in teacher's work	Need to take into account guardians' wishes or demands regarding worldviews.	Need to intervene either in pupil's behaviour or home upbringing practices.
Description of guardians	Cooperative guardians. Demanding guardians.	Guardians as educational partners. Guardians as object of appeal or instruction.

Differing worldviews appeared in the teacher's talk as *the need to take into account guardians' wishes or demands regarding worldviews*. This need emerged in situations where a pupil's family has convictions that differ from dominant convictions.

> T3: Well, sometimes, especially when there are, well, children that belong to a different religious group. Then you should probably settle with the parents about what kinds of wishes they have.

In this extract the teacher points out that the need for WVD arises from the pupil belonging to *a different* religion. Teachers also described the same need as arising from their wish to take the worldview of the pupil's family into consideration in their teaching. A 'different' religion can be interpreted in the Finnish context as something other than (secular) Lutheranism. The norm within the school reflects a secular Lutheran ethos, wherein Christian religious elements are culturally contextualised. Secular Lutheranism does not challenge the common practices relating to religion in basic education. However, in cases of very strong conviction, even Lutheran faith could be considered by teachers to differ from the norm:

> T4: That kind of family, that is really, a very strongly Christian family and . . . they sent a really long letter on the matter of why in school we have decided to have this kind of secular Christmas celebration.

Here the teacher describes an interaction with a guardian with a strong Christian conviction that goes beyond secular Lutheranism. Being 'more' religious is something that also needs to be taken into consideration as a diverging worldview.

In the interviews, teachers named religious groups, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Muslims or described guardians challenging certain school traditions that are related to religion, namely Christianity. Teachers described situations where activities or topics that they consider to be normal or as belonging to Finnish cultural heritage were questioned by guardians based on their religious or worldview conviction.

> T2: With every art or craft work, the name of the task was supposed to not hint at anything [religious]. Like, you're not allowed to make Easter bunnies and that sort of thing. Which can be considered part of Finnish culture and can be made without referring to the religious aspect at all.

In this extract, the teacher describes the conflict between a guardian's demand to refrain from all content related to religion in their teaching and the teacher's perception of what belongs to Finnish culture. The teacher points out that some religious elements are part of Finnish culture and, hence, can be part of teaching for everyone if confessional aspects are

not highlighted. Guardians' requests to refrain from religious content led teachers to consider guardians' wishes and demands when planning and executing teaching in their classrooms. Guardians could also accept teacher's actions in the classroom, as in the next example:

> T3: When I used to tell those younger kids long stories, like, hour-long fairy tales, I asked the Jehovah's Witness parents before how they felt about it, because those stories mention Allah pretty often . . . I asked whether that would bother them. They said, "Not at all, go ahead, tell the stories, it's totally fine". They were a family that had a really positive attitude toward the school.

In the discourse on differing worldviews, teachers described guardians as two different types of partners in the WVD: *cooperative* or *demanding*. In the teachers' talk, *cooperative guardians* present their needs regarding their convictions in the manner of a polite question or as wishes. Cooperative guardians have a positive attitude towards school and are favourably disposed towards teachers' practices that may also include religious elements. As part of this cooperation, the teachers wished for openness from the guardians regarding their worldviews to 'avoid unpleasant situations'. The relationship between cooperative guardians and teachers can be seen as equal. With cooperative guardians, teachers were willing to fulfil guardians' wishes if possible or reasonable with the resources available to the teacher. Teachers described that it was possible to negotiate with cooperative guardians and that both parties were able to reach a compromise. Teachers appreciated the cooperative attitude of these parents as they also had experience of 'many other kinds of families', i.e. demanding guardians.

Demanding guardians express demands regarding their convictions and take issue with schools' and teachers' established practices for being either 'too' religious or 'too' secular. Teachers often felt pressured when faced with requests and demands that seemed unrealistic or unachievable. Notably, according to the teachers, changes in school traditions could cause previously cooperative parents to act as demanding parents. Teachers could also be proactive on the matter if pupils' convictions were known and the teacher had previous experience and, hence, some knowledge of what is required and involved in teaching children with certain religious backgrounds.

Overall, teachers' talk about differing worldviews was viewed in terms of the limitations they set on pupils' attention to schoolwork and school events. Differing worldviews also led teachers to encounter situations where they had to manage questions of freedom of religion in both its positive (right to profess and practice) and negative (right not to profess or practice) senses.

Conflict of values between school and guardians

The second identified discourse was a *conflict of values between the school and guardians*. In this discourse the source of aberration was related to pupil behaviour or school achievement. In both cases, teachers recognised the cause of the pupil's actions to be a conflict between the values of the school and the guardians. Teachers named different situations where they felt obliged to take a stand on matters involving the worldviews of pupils' families. Such situations were related to values, ethics, and morals, but teachers did not make an explicit connection between these and religion. On the other hand, teachers described the need to influence guardians'

upbringing practices with the child's best interest in mind. These aberrations appeared in teachers work as *a need to intervene either in pupil's behaviour or upbringing practices of the home.*

Regarding *the need to intervene in pupil's behaviour*, the main reason for WVD between teacher and guardians was cases where pupils were expressing themselves in a manner that teachers felt did not suit the ethos of the school. Teachers depicted the reason for these incidents as the ethics and values of the guardians that pupils had adopted. Teachers talked about the connection between pupils' behaviour and the values that the behaviour reflected, such as racism, individualism, and supremacy of one's own worldview.

> T4: . . . also if a child is expressing, say, very racist views, that are clearly from the father or mother, not taught in school . . . then I do say that this not the way to talk about other people in school. We are not allowed to do so. And I think it is the teacher's duty to bring in a corrective lens if the conversation goes in that direction. Teachers are not fulfilling their duty as an educator if they don't get involved.

In this extract the teacher emphasises the responsibility of the teacher as an educator. Racist expressions that the teacher relates with the guardians' values are seen as violating human rights, which the school is committed to adhere to. The teacher is required to act and correct the pupil's racist behaviour even though this could lead to a conflict of values between the school and guardians.

The teachers' talk suggested that, in some cases, guardians' views and values could be narrow and biased. In such cases, teachers are obliged to broaden pupils' possibilities to familiarise with different worldviews and enhance their thinking towards the curriculum's core values.

The need to intervene in upbringing practices of the home has occurred when pupil performance in school seemed to be disturbed by the value judgements of guardians. Potential indicators were, for example, constant tiredness of a pupil, homework repeatedly left undone, or a pupil's indifferent attitude towards school.

> T4: Sometimes you have to try to influence the parents' values. Would it be, in this stage of life, important for the child to go to school? Would less time with friends be needed to leave enough time for [homework]? Or some kids have an enormous number of hobbies and say that they can't stay for remedial lessons because of their hobbies. I've said to the children that your primary task is to focus on school.

In this extract the teacher is speaking about the conflict between the educational values of the school and the guardians' socialisation values. This highlights the teacher's view that it is in the child's best interest to prioritise schoolwork over social life and hobbies and that this compels them to try to influence the parents' values. The teacher questions whether the guardians' upbringing practices support the societal value of the primacy of school. Activities such as spending time with friends or disproportional leisure time activities are secondary, from the teacher's point of view. This emphasises the importance of obligatory schoolwork and responsibilities over optional ways of spending time.

In the case of an aberration of educational values, teachers described *guardians as objects of appeal and instruction or as educational partners*. The need to try to influence guardians' upbringing practices arises from the teachers' view of the priority of schoolwork in the pupil's life. When aberrations were related to the pupil's performance at

school, guardians were described as *educational partners* with whom teachers tried to resolve possible challenges to support the pupil.

Discussion

In this study we examined teachers' talk about worldview dialogues with guardians and identified two different discourses on WVDs with guardians: *differing worldviews*, and *conflict of values between the school and guardians*. These two discourses are intertwined in the sense that both include elements of *aberrations to the unspoken norm* from the perspective of the teacher. The main results resonate with previous studies showing that teacher – parent interactions commonly occur when problems or value tensions arise (Sormunen 2012; Stroetinga, Leeman, and Veugelers 2018). In both discourses identified in this study teachers seemed to encounter a conflict between their own values and the values and beliefs of guardians regarding the upbringing of pupils. This conflict was evident in the teachers' descriptions of the need to have WVDs. Teachers did not explicitly define what they consider the norm, but it was seen implicitly as a status where no WVD was required or occurred. Though both discourses were aberrations, the first was associated with guardians' relation to religion and religious worldviews and the latter to questions of raising children, which emerged in relation to the conflict of values in upbringing and education as well as differing viewpoints on the interest of the child.

This study highlights the complexities and challenges faced by teachers when encountering diverse belief systems within a secular educational framework. The study aligns with the findings of Rissanen (2019) and Jokikokko (2010), which highlight the importance of intercultural competence in education. However, it also extends the literature by providing specific examples of how teachers manage WVDs in practice and highlighting the need to regard worldview consciousness (Flanagan 2021; P.-M. Niemi, Kimanen, and Kallioniemi 2020) as part of teachers' intercultural competence. The study also connects with previous studies on teacher-parent collaboration in upbringing (Stroetinga, Leeman, and Veugelers 2018). The study's findings are consistent with the notion that teachers in Nordic countries often operate within a framework of 'cultural Protestantism' as an implicit norm (Berglund 2017; Rissanen, Ubani, and Sakaranaho 2020), but they also reveal the proactive strategies teachers employ to address conflicts and accommodate diverse beliefs.

The teachers' discourses on WVD with guardians seem to reflect three ideals of Finnish education. The first is the ideal of *guiding normative frameworks*. This ideal consists of human rights and freedoms that the school as an authority is obligated to ensure for pupils, that is constituted also in the broader value foundations of Finnish basic education (FNCCBE, 2014; Rissanen and Poulter 2023). The ideal of guiding normative frameworks can be seen in the discourse of differing worldviews. It emerges in teachers' descriptions of actions they take to accommodate or limit their teaching in accordance with guardians' wishes to ensure pupils freedom of religion. The second is an ideal of *inclusivity* that includes objectives of intercultural education. This pedagogical ideal considers diversity of worldviews as part of cultural diversity, which is seen as an asset in education (FNCCBE, 2014). This emerges in teachers' descriptions of their aim to support encountering and accepting diversity in school and corresponds with previous literature on intercultural pedagogical aims in teachers' work (Jokikokko 2010; Romijn, Slot, and Leseman 2021). In

the teacher – guardian WVDs, teachers used intercultural aims as an argument to justify school practices or interventions to address pupils' intolerant behaviour. The third ideal reflected in these discourses is ideal of *parental involvement*. As described earlier, parental involvement has been recognised as an asset for pupils' school achievement (Koivuhovi et al. 2025; Wilder 2014). According to this ideal, guardians are involved in pupil assessment via learning meetings and teachers have a responsibility to carry out communication with guardians on all matters regarding pupil learning and interactional skills in the classroom. In this study, this can be seen in the reported contacts with teachers on issues concerning pupil's worldviews and assumed conflicts with teaching or school events, such as Jehovah's Witnesses' concerns regarding Christmas arts and crafts made in class.

It can be considered whether the two discourses presented earlier, along with the ideals they reflect, illustrate what is regarded as a 'normal' worldview from the perspective of teachers. This 'normal' worldview is not explicitly described in the teachers' discourses but is evident in its very lack of description. The 'normal' worldview does not constrain pupils' involvement in teaching or question taught scientific facts. The 'normal' worldview accepts cultural Protestantism as part of the school culture (Berglund 2017; Rissanen, Ubani, and Sakaranaho 2020) and teachers do not have to restrain themselves from cultivating, for example, Christmas traditions in their classroom. When it comes to values of education, the 'normal' worldview raises pupils' school achievement as the highest good over social values such as time spent with friends or in hobbies. From these perspectives one might say that in this study the discourses on WVDs between teachers and guardians also draw a picture of the dominant societal discourse of liberal, secular Protestantism implemented in Finnish basic education.

The limitation of this study is the sample size, which is relatively small. It consists of only five teachers, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Further research is thus needed to validate the findings. The position of the first author as a teacher herself can be both an asset and a limitation to this work. As a teacher, the first author has a shared understanding of the teacher's work. On the other hand, this can, if not reflected on carefully, lead to misconceptions or to a lack of questioning of one's own understanding if not reflected carefully.

We suggest that future research should examine the impact of teacher education on teachers' ability to manage WVD. Additionally, further studies could investigate the perspectives of students and parents to provide a more comprehensive understanding of WVDs in education. As all the teachers in this study were native Finnish teachers who have had their teacher education in Finland, it would be interesting to investigate teachers with differing cultural or educational background.

This study contributes to the understanding of intercultural competence and the role of teachers in mediating WVDs. Intercultural competence entails understanding and valuing cultural differences, recognising how one's own cultural identity shapes teaching practices, and applying culturally responsive pedagogies (Jokikokko 2010; Romijn, Slot, and Leseman 2021). Accordingly, appreciation of worldview diversity, reflexivity regarding one's own worldview, and the use of worldview-aware pedagogy can be regarded as key dimensions that support teachers' abilities to mediate WVDs. The findings underscore the need for enhanced teacher education, supportive policies, and inclusive practices to ensure that all students can thrive in a diverse educational environment. Furthermore, teachers need nuanced understanding of the worldview-related ideals and values that

shape parental perspectives on upbringing. This would prepare future teachers to act as interculturally competent teachers in the field also regarding worldviews and religions as part of the diversity they face in their work. The study suggests that current guidelines may not provide sufficient support for teachers in managing WVDs, highlighting the need for clearer and more practical policies.

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Notes on contributors

Elina Hirvonen is a doctoral researcher at the School of Applied Educational Science and Teacher Education at University of Eastern Finland. Her research focuses on the teacher perspective on the worldview dialogue in the Finnish Basic Education.

Inkeri Rissanen is a Senior University Lecturer of Multicultural Education at Tampere University, Faculty of Education and Culture, and a docent of school pedagogy at the University of Helsinki. Her research interests in the areas of intercultural and worldview education include intercultural professionalism of teachers, religion in public education, and growth mindset pedagogy.

Raili Keränen-Pantsu is a PhD and visiting scholar at the School of Applied Educational Science of the University of Eastern Finland. Her research interests include cultural narratives and narrative theory, education related to cultures, values and worldviews, teacher education, and transformative learning towards planetary good life.

Martin Ubani is the Professor of Religious Education at the School of Theology and the School of Applied Educational Science of the University of Eastern Finland. His research interests include religion and education, multicultural education, RE teacher education and classroom research.

ORCID

Elina Hirvonen http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7148-5178
Inkeri Rissanen http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2676-0169
Raili Keränen-Pantsu http://orcid.org/0009-0000-6821-6391
Martin Ubani http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4877-4094

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