

Personal Worldview Tool

Dawn Cox July 2023

"The truth is that a worldview is like colored glasses; it colors everything at which we look. It is a grid through which one views all of life. As such it helps form our thoughts, values, and decisions. The tragedy is that most people do not even know what their worldview is, how they got it, and how important it is in their lives."

Geisler 2008

"Aiding teachers to know who they are, to 'know self'...., particularly making conscious that which is unconscious, becoming worldview conscious, contributes to their ability to be reflexive, effective teachers."

Flanagan 2021

'Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are'

Hamachek 1999

What is your personal worldview? Have you ever considered the influences on your positionality? What does this mean for your teaching?

- A tool to reflect on your own personal worldview
- Can be used by teachers of any subject (with further resources for teachers of RE)
- Can be completed as a whole or in parts

Step 1	Worldview questions
Step 2	Worldview influences
Step 3	Worldview impact
Step 4	Your worldview and others
Step 5	Changing worldviews

Keywords: personal worldview, personal knowledge, positionality, reflexivity, worldview consciousness



WARNING! This tool is to be used by an individual and not shared unless with consent. Individuals may feel some steps/questions are too personal and therefore it is recommended to skip anything that may be sensitive/triggering.

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Step 1 - Worldview questions

Consider your own worldview.

Answer the following questions. You can think about your answers or write them down. The answer can be 'I don't know' and any question can be skipped or left blank. Use extra paper where necessary.

Question	Your response
1)What is right and wrong? How do you decide what is right or wrong?	
2)Who/What is important to you in your life? Why?	
3)How do you decide what is true/real?	
4)Who/what inspires you? Why?	
5)Is there life beyond the known universe? Why?	
6)What sources of authority (people/texts etc) do you listen to? Why?	
7)What is the most basic truth of life? What is at the very core of everything? What is the foundation that everything else is built on?	
8)How should we behave? How should we act towards others?	
9)Where did everything in our world come from? How do we know where it came from?	
10)What is real? What is not real? How do you know?	
11)What is the purpose of life?	
12)What happens when we die?	

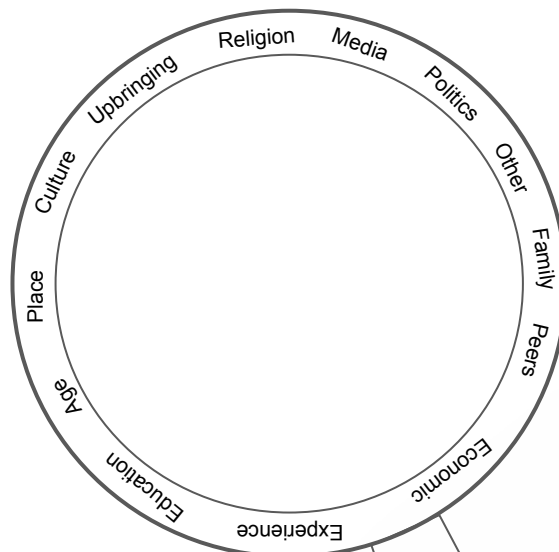
Step 2 - Worldview Influences

What has contributed to your worldview?

The following are some suggestions of things that may have contributed to your personal worldview or personal lens. Is there anything missing? What would you include in 'other'?

Annotate the lens with initial thoughts about how they do/don't influence your worldview. How much emphasis do you place on these in your worldview? You can consider one, some or all of the influences.

Then read the question prompts for each and make a note of your answers. Reflect on the impact these influences might have on your worldview and the answers to the questions in step 1.



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Personal Lens

Step 2 - Worldview Influences

Education

- What formal education do you have?
- What informal education have you had?
- What subjects/disciplines are your qualifications in?
- How have your experiences in education throughout your life affected your worldview?

Place

- Where have you lived?
- Where have you visited?
- What geographical/political/religious/cultural differences are there?
- Are there some places that you prefer to be than others? Where? Why?

Politics

- Where on the political spectrum would you put yourself?
- Do you actively participate in political discussion/actions?
- What values would you say come from your political views?

Culture

- If you were to describe your cultural background, what would it include?
- Has the culture that you lived in remained the same during your life? If no, what have they included?
- Do you consider yourself active in the cultural life of your community? And if so, in which ways?

Media

- What media sources have you used throughout your lifetime?
- Are you aware of the biases of the sources you use? If so, what are they?
- Do you use social media? Personally? Professionally?
- Has the media formed/changed your views in any way?

Family

- How important has family been throughout your life?
- What impact have a family member/s had on your on your worldview?
- Do you think you have the same opinions/beliefs as family members? Why?

Other

- What other things have influenced your personal worldview? Why? How?

Step 2 - Worldview Influences

Religion (and non-religion)

- Were you brought up with religious/non-religious beliefs?
- If so, how has this impacted your thinking?
- Do you consider yourself to be religious and/or spiritual?
- How has the religious/non-religious background of the places that you have lived in affected you? e.g. does the country have religious holidays?
- Was religion a part of your education? If so, what impact might this have had?
- Do you agree with the teachings of one or more religions?
- Do you take part in religious festivals? If so, in a religious/secular/other way?

Economic (status)

- What has your economic status been throughout your life?
- Has it changed? How? Why?
- How has it affected your lifestyle?
- Do you socialise with people of different economic statuses to you? How might this affect your views?
- Do you work with people of different economic statuses to you? How might this affect your views?

Peers

- Throughout your life, how have your peers impacted your views? e.g. childhood, teenage years, early adulthood etc
- Do you have a close/wise circle of friends? What impact do they have on your views?

Upbringing

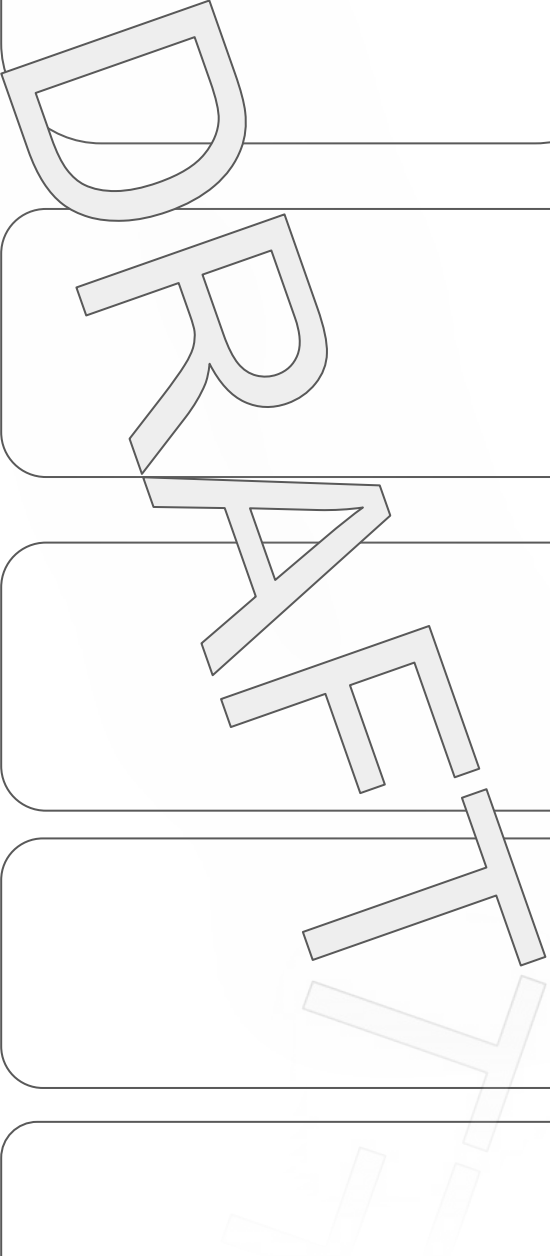
- How would you describe your upbringing? How has this influenced your worldview?
- Are there any events in your upbringing that significantly affected your worldview? What? How?

Age

- To what extent have you changed your worldview over different periods of your life?
- Do you socialise/work with people of different ages? How might affect your views?

Experience

- How have different experiences throughout your life impacted your worldview?
- Have you had significant negative/positive experiences that have affected your worldview?

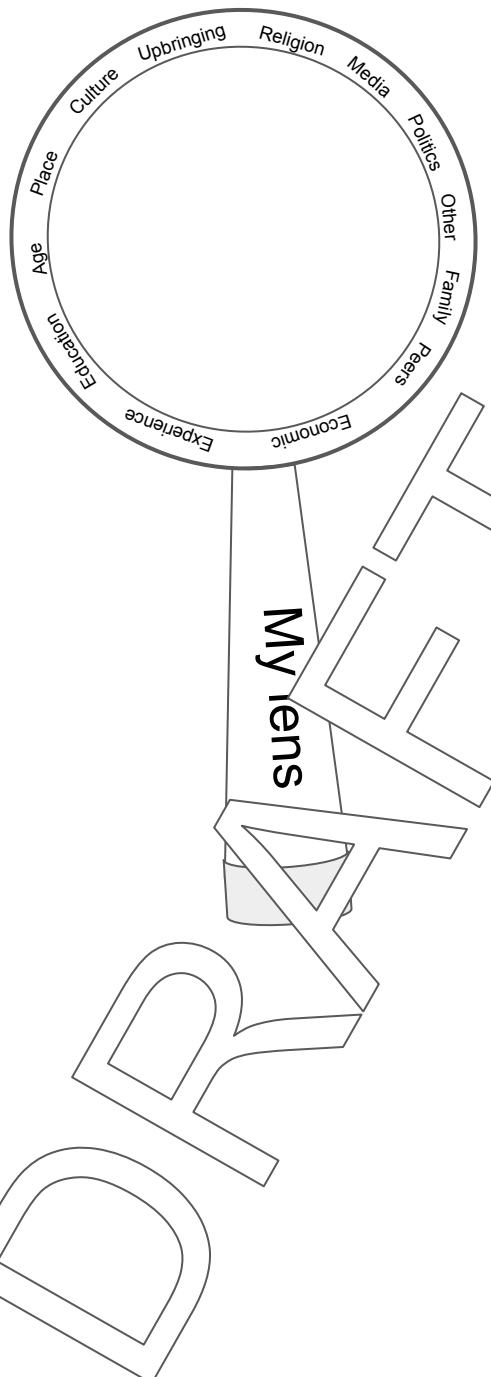


Step 3- Worldview impact

What impact might your worldview have on you as a teacher?

Your worldview impacts how you think, how you act, how you speak, how you teach etc This step helps to reflect on the impact it has on you as a teacher.

Whilst it is a personal tool, if you have a trusted colleague that has seen you teach, it may be helpful to discuss with them.



Purpose of education/Your subject

Consider how your worldview may impact what you believe the purpose of education/subject is.

- What's the purpose of education? Is this the same for all ages? Why?
- Why do you teach? What made you decide to be a teacher?
- What's the purpose of your subject?
- What makes your subject different from others?
- Which of the influences determines these views? Why?

Curriculum

Consider how your worldview impacts your curriculum and what you teach.

- How does your worldview influence what you choose to teach in your curriculum?
- What disciplinary biases do you have? Why?
- What do you include in your curriculum and what do you not include? Why?
- What emphasis do you place on things due to your worldview?

Pedagogy

Consider how you teach; what happens in the classroom. How has your pedagogy been influenced by your worldview?

- How does your worldview (especially your view on the purpose of education) influence how you teach in the classroom?
- What pedagogies do you choose to use? Why?
- Which do you choose not to use? Why?
- What impact might these have on students?
- How has the language you use in class been influenced by your worldview?

Step 4 - Your worldview and others

How does your own worldview work with others' worldviews?

How do people 'see' your worldview?

Does your worldview and the views within it link to others? How? Why? Consider what makes your worldview in terms of relationships with others, whether it be individuals you know/don't know or an organised worldview.

The Johari window can be used to help to reflect on how apparent your worldview is to yourself and to others. Consider what aspects of your worldview are known and unknown to yourself and to others. How might this impact your teaching?



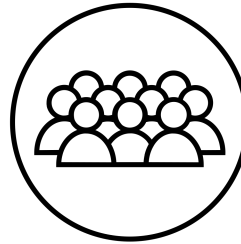
Individual

Which aspect/s of your worldview are unique to you? Why?



Social (personal)

Which aspect/s of your worldview are similar to others through the same experiences? e.g. family



Organised/ Institutional

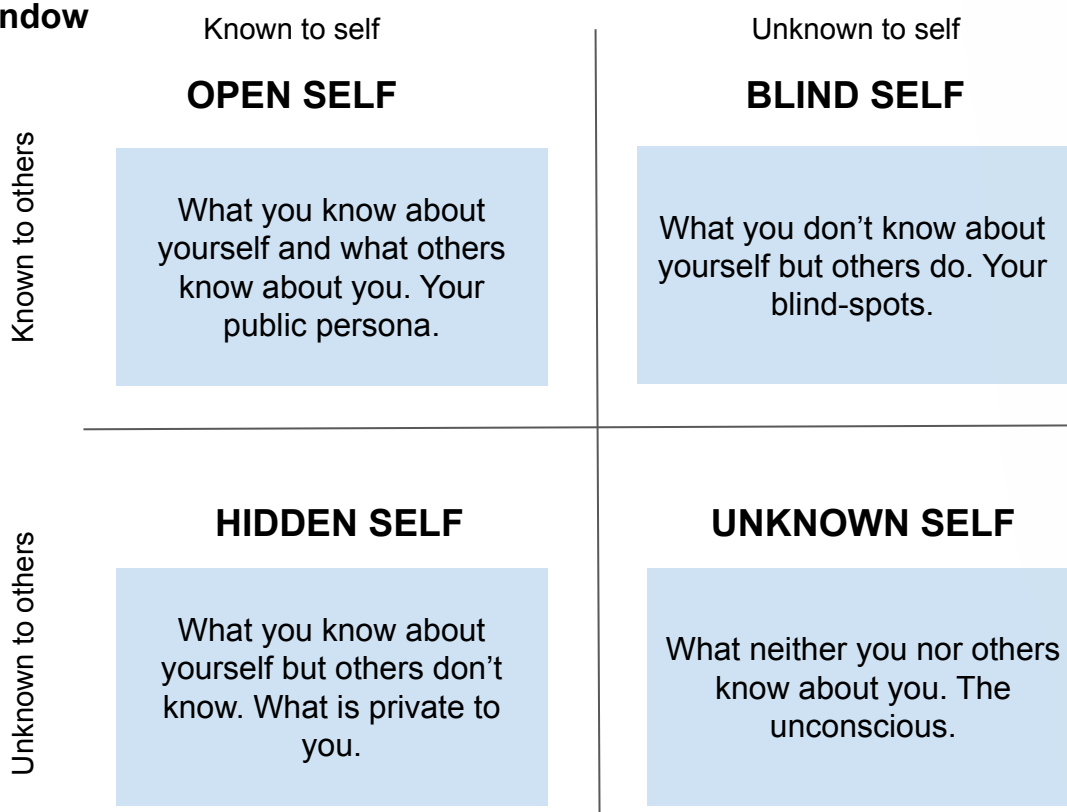
Which aspect/s of your worldview are similar to others because they come from an organisation/institution? e.g. a religion



Social (impersonal)

Which aspect/s of your worldview are similar to others without any connection with them? e.g. veganism

The Johari window



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Step 5 - Changing worldviews

How has your worldview changed over time?

Worldviews are not static and they change over our lives. Our answers to big questions (step1) change and the influences on our worldview (step 2) evolve.

Consider how your worldview has changed over time and what might have had a significant impact on this.

Choose three worldview questions from step 1. Consider how your answer to these have changed over time at different age periods of your life

Worldview question	Childhood (0-12)	Teenage (13-19)	Young Adult (20-29)	Adulthood (30+)

What are the significant influences or life experiences (if any) you've had at different stages of your life that have had an impact on the changes on your worldview?

	Childhood (0-12)	Teenage (13-19)	Young Adult (20-29)	Adulthood (30+)
Influence/ Experience				