### A typology of geography’s powerful knowledge

<table>
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<th>TYPE</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
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| **1.** Knowledge that provides students with ‘new ways of thinking about the world.’ | Using ‘big ideas’ such as:  
- Place  
- Space  
- Environment  
- Interconnection  
These are meta-concepts that are distinguished from substantive concepts, like ‘city’ or ‘climate’. |
| **2.** Knowledge that provides students with powerful ways of analysing, explaining and understanding. | Using ideas to:  
- **Analyse**  
  E.g. place; spatial distribution …  
- **Explain**  
  E.g. hierarchy; agglomeration …  
- **Generalise**  
  E.g. models (push-pull models of migration; demographic transition …)  
| **3.** Knowledge that gives students some power over their own knowledge. | To do this, students need to know something about the ways knowledge has been, and continues to be developed and tested in the discipline.  
This is about having an answer to the question: ‘how do you know?’ This is an underdeveloped area of geographical education, but is a crucial aspect of ‘epistemic quality’ (Hudson, 2016). |
| **4.** Knowledge that enables young people to follow and participate in debates on significant local, national and global issues. | School geography has a good record in teaching this knowledge, partly because it combines the natural and social sciences, and the humanities. It also examines significant ‘nexus’ issues such as: food, water and energy security; climate change; development. |
| **5.** Knowledge of the World | This takes students beyond their own experience – the world’s diversity of environments, cultures societies and economies. In a sense, this knowledge is closest to how geography is perceived in the popular imagination. It contributes strongly to a student’s ‘general knowledge’. |

**Source:** adapted from Maude, 2016