

A typology of geography's powerful knowledge

TYPE	CHARACTERISTICS
<p>1. Knowledge that provides students with ‘new ways of thinking about the world.’</p>	<p>Using ‘big ideas’ such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place • Space • Environment • Interconnection <p>These are meta-concepts that are distinguished from substantive concepts, like ‘city’ or ‘climate’.</p>
<p>2. Knowledge that provides students with powerful ways of analysing, explaining and understanding.</p>	<p>Using ideas to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analyse</i> E.g. place; spatial distribution ... • <i>Explain</i> E.g. hierarchy; agglomeration ... • <i>Generalise</i> E.g. models (push-pull models of migration; demographic transition ...
<p>3. Knowledge that gives students some power over their own knowledge.</p>	<p>To do this, students need to know something about the ways knowledge has been, and continues to be developed and tested in the discipline.</p> <p>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).</p>
<p>4. Knowledge that enables young people to follow and participate in debates on significant local, national and global issues.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>5. Knowledge of the World</p>	<p>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’.</p>

Source: adapted from Maude, 2016