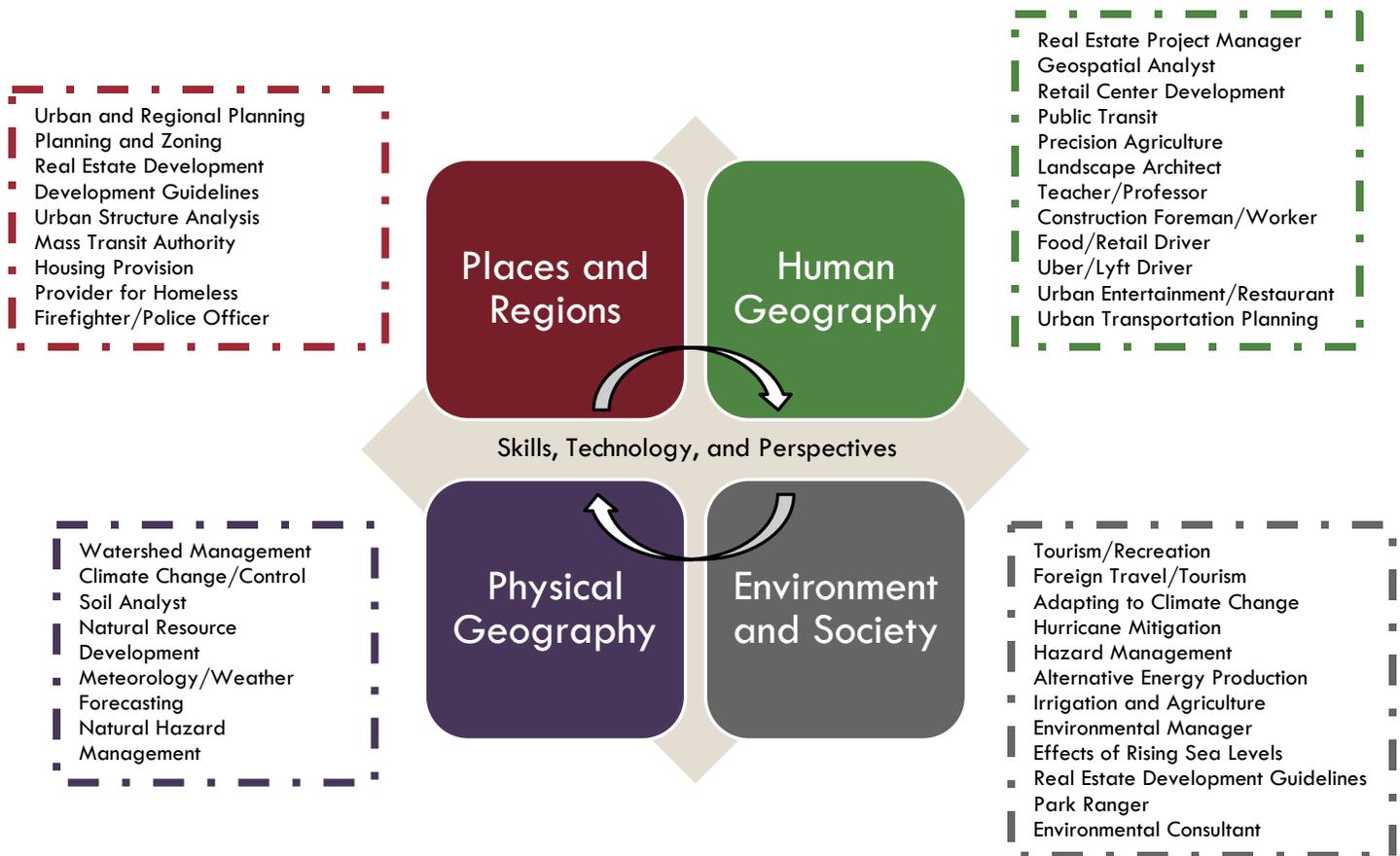


Teaching and Learning with Powerful Geography

Geography: As we all know, geography is an eclectic subject spanning the human and physical world. New techniques in geospatial analysis enrich the discipline. Too often “learn it all” standards ask that students learn the same geographic content and skills. This “top-down” approach has resulted in rote memorization learning, a characterization that seems to have lingered in the minds of students and the general public. We can and must do better.

Powerful Geography (PG): As teachers look out at their classes, they see students of different races, ethnicities, and religions. Students have different socio-economic backgrounds, widely varying abilities to learn, and a broad range of aspirations. The “top-down” curriculum prescription does not fit this diversity. PG is what Wesley Null calls a “liberating curriculum”. Through geography, each student can embark on a critical pathway to jobs and careers as well as carve out an honorable and productive place in modern society that aligns with their aspirations.



The above diagram suggests the value of PG and links each major category of geography to a sampling of jobs and careers that can help all students achieve what they want to be and do in the future. And, yes, many of these opportunities span more than one focal area. Also, significant strides have been made in the geospatial technology sector highlighting jobs that require training in computer mapping, the use of analytic tools, and different ways of thinking about the world. In all cases, geography offers a perspective that is spatial, place-based, and concerned with solving social and environmental problems.

