# Powerful Geography

## The Evolution of Learning in Geography Education

**Geography**: As we all know, geography is an eclectic subject spanning the human and physical world. New techniques in geospatial analysis enrich the discipline. In the past, geography has been taught focusing on the memorization of facts and features (Period 1). Then teaching and learning turned to the standards approach (Period 2) and students were expected to learn the same geographic content and skills to be a "geographically informed person". Both approaches have done little to expand the value of geographic knowledge, skills, and technology within the K12 environment or in the eyes of the general public.

**Period 1 - Memorization**

- learn a whole range of geographic facts
- color maps
- identify physical features
- capitals of states and countries
- location/place

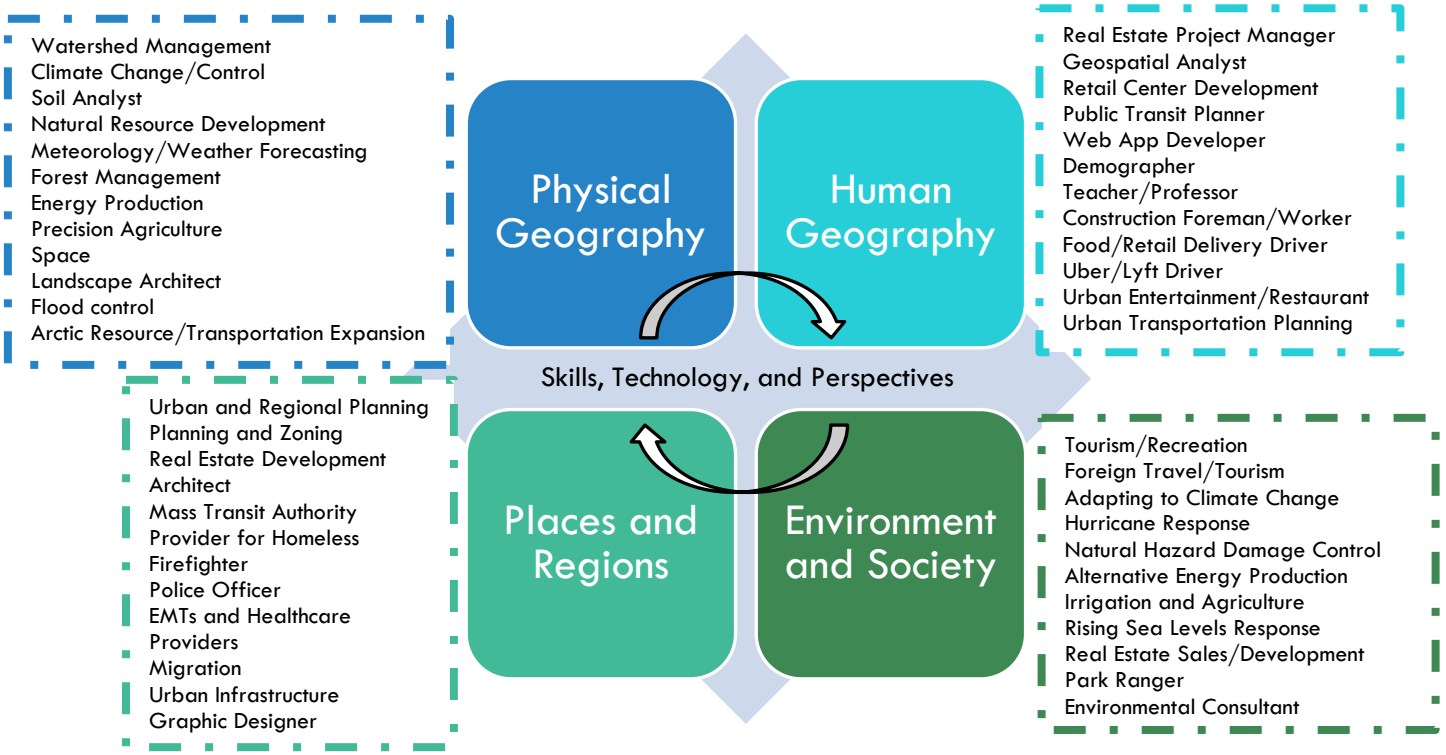
**Period 2 - Standards/ Prescribed Learning**

- what students should learn and be able to do to be a geographically informed person
- all students must learn the same information to reach an arbitrary level of knowledge
- "top-down" curriculum

**Period 3 - Powerful Geography**

- teach what students can do with their geographic knowledge
- takes into consideration student diversity and inclusivity
- accounts for students' interests and aspirations
- "bottom-up" curriculum

**Powerful Geography (PG)**: As teachers look out at their classes, they see students of different races, ethnicities, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds. They have widely varying abilities to learn and a broad range of aspirations. Through a Powerful Geography approach to teaching and learning (Period 3), each student can embark on a critical pathway to jobs and careers as well as carve out a productive place in modern society that aligns with their interests and aspirations.




The above diagram suggests the value of PG and links each major category of geography to a sampling of jobs and careers that offer a diverse student body ways to achieve what they want to be and do in the future. 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.

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