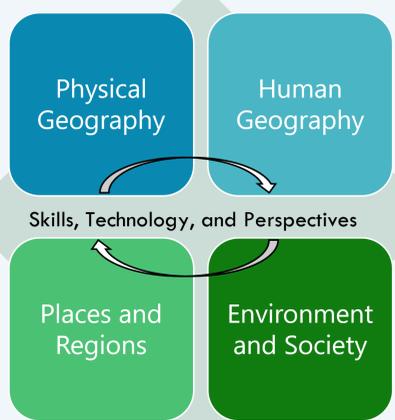


# Powerful Geography



## What is Powerful Geography

Powerful Geography is a new approach to teaching and learning about Geography. Every student in our classroom is different and no class is ever the same, yet teachers and educators continue to teach the same content and curriculum over and over again. Powerful Geography is about making geography education relevant to our students. Instead of teaching them the same facts, Powerful Geography dives deeper into the standards (curriculum) by showing the student what they can do after school with their geographic knowledge both in their personal life and as a job/career. On our Powerful Geography website we have compiled a large list of jobs that use geographic knowledge and skills one way or another. Through our PD workshops we provide the teacher with the ability to guide their students to those resources so that they can explore the opportunities available out there for them and why their geography course is so important.



## 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.

**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.

### 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 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 Logic Model

### Who Are Our Students?

Collect student aspirations and attitudes data in school districts in different states.

### Why Do We Teach Geography?

Interview employers and professionals who use geography in careers that interest students.

### What, How and When Should We Teach?

Design and develop state-based Powerful Geography curriculum resources that expose students early and consistently to the uses of geography in their states and communities that will foster student aspirations and showcase the relevancy of geography.

## Teacher Resources

The Powerful Geography website is full of numerous resources that a teacher can use and implement into their classroom that relates to students diverse aspirations and interests. Explore these and more at [www.powerfulgeography.org](http://www.powerfulgeography.org) or scan the QR code below



## WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH GEOGRAPHY?

Geography can open up an endless list of career opportunities for you! Here are just some ideas:

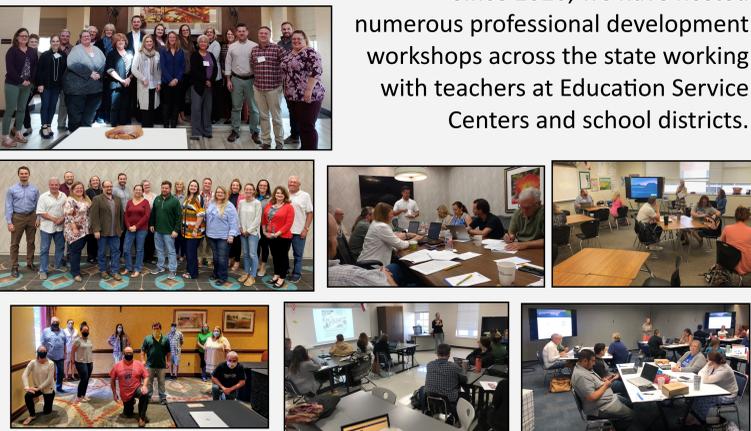


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More information available at [www.globe.gov](http://www.globe.gov)

## Professional Development Workshops

From 2017 - 2019 Powerful Geography began with a number of workshops with geography education professors, teachers, and social studies coordinators to help develop materials and ideas for Powerful Geography.

Since 2020, we have hosted numerous professional development workshops across the state working with teachers at Education Service Centers and school districts.



## Publications

You can read about Powerful Geography in some of these articles:

- Zadrozny, J., Boehm, R.G, and Solem, M. FORTHCOMING. Teaching climate change through Powerful Geography. *The Geography Teacher*.
- Solem, M., Vander Weil, B., Boehm, R.G., and Zadrozny, J. 2022, November 8. Powerful Geography at Work. *American Association of Geographers Newsletter*.
- Larsen, T.B. and Solem, M. 2022. Conveying the Applications and Relevance of the Powerful Geography Approach through Humanitarian Mapping, *The Geography Teacher*, 19(1), 43-49.
- Larsen, T.B., Solem, M., Zadrozny, J. and Boehm, R.G. 2022. Contextualizing powerful geographic knowledge in higher education: Data-driven curriculum design to interweave student aspirations with workforce applications, *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 31(2), 139-151.
- Boehm, R.G., Solem, M., and Zadrozny, J. 2018. The Rise of Powerful Geography, *The Social Studies*, 109(2), 125-135.

## Conferences

The Grosvenor Center/National Center have sponsored and attended local, national and international conferences to share with scholars from around the world the research of Powerful Geography.



Top Left: Session at Texas Council for the Social Studies (TxCS) Annual Meeting October 2022.  
Top Right: Plenary session and public rollout at National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) Annual Meeting July 2017.  
Bottom Right: Session at Texas Social Studies Supervisors Association (TSSSA) Fall Meeting October 2021.  
Bottom Left: Group photo from the Powerful Geography Conference in Costa Rica October 2018.

