



Royal Geographical Society

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and geographical learning

An initial presentation of findings from my current Masters research, looking into the conceptions that primary teachers hold on geography

Joshua Sutheran - @mrsutheran
Deputy Head of Geography, FRGS, GA Fellow

A bit of background information...

Reading around knowledge – considering thoughts on Powerful Knowledge (Young et al., 2014; Lambert, 2015, Standish, 2018, Didau, 2019)

Various work on conceptions that primary trainee teachers hold (Walford, 1996; Catling, 2004; Morley, 2012, Puttick et al., 2017).

**A lack of research into current classroom teacher conceptions
Research based around open question – what is Geography?**

**What are current teacher conceptions?
Why is it important , and what barriers limit subject development?**

KS2 National Curriculum Aim	<u>Catlina (2004)</u>	<u>Morley (2012)</u>	KS5 Concepts
Place Knowledge	<u>Placeist</u> , Environmentalist	<u>Placeist</u>	Inequality, representation, identity, globalisation
Locational Knowledge	Globalist, Environmentalist	Global Factfinder	Representation, identity, globalisation
Processes (human and physical)	<u>Earthist</u> , Environmentalist	Global processor Synthesiser	Systems, Equilibrium, feedback, resilience, risk
Interdependence of processes	Interactionist, Environmentalist	Interactionists Synthesiser	Causality, Systems, Equilibrium, feedback, interdependence, thresholds
Spatial and Temporal Change	Environmentalist	Synthesiser	Inequality, feedback, globalisation, sustainability, mitigation and adaptation,
Enquiry Process and Skills		Facilitator	NEA

What is Geography?

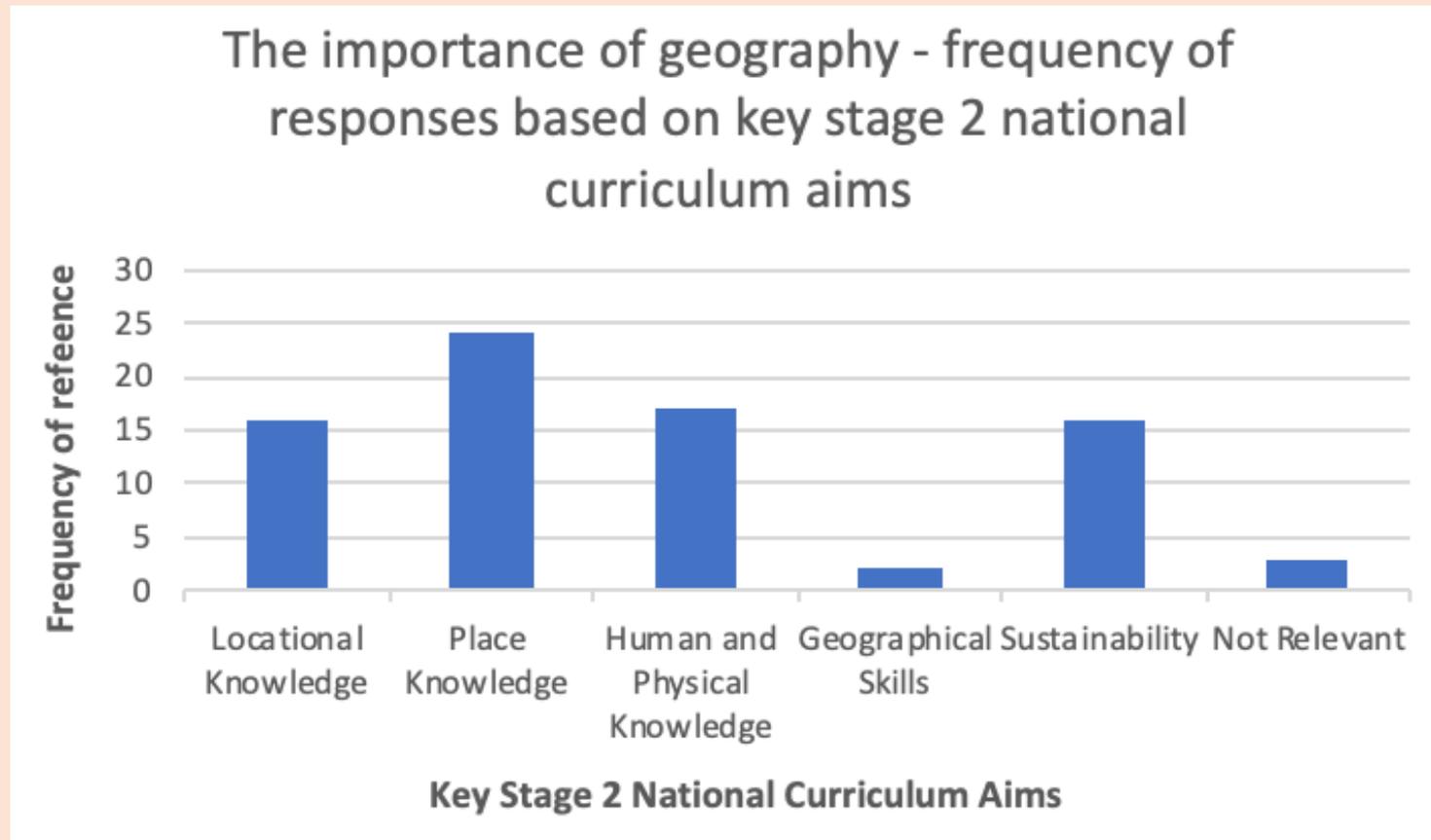
- *Previous work centred on this question*
- *Generalised views on what geography is*
- *Table demonstrates how each conception links to both KS2 and KS5 National Curriculum/Exam Spec key concepts*

Geographical perspective	Geography as the study
Globalists	... that develops an informed knowledge and understanding of the world, its human and physical features and environments and of the countries of the world.
Earthists	... of the Earth, its physical and human features and environments and of the forces and processes that shape them.
Interactionists	...of the interactions between and interdependence of people and their natural and social environments, of the processes that sustain these interrelationships and of their effects and influences as outcomes.
Placeists	...of people's lives and activities in places, communities and cultures to understand what they are like, why they are as they are, what this means for them and how they relate to others.
Environmentalists	...of environmental concerns and issues, locally and globally and about sustainability.

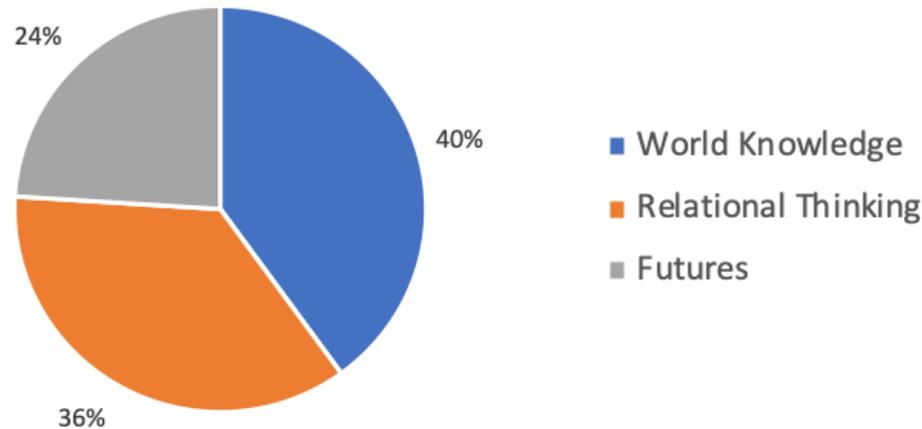
Figure 2. Catling's classification of postgraduate primary teacher trainees' conceptions of geography. Source: based on examples given in Catling (2004, pp. 149–158).

Geographical Perspective	<u>Catling (2004)</u> <i>% of statements</i>	Puttick et al (2017) <i>% of statements</i>	Sutheran (2020) <i>% of statements</i>
Globalists	36.2	41.3	34
<u>Earthists</u>	30.3	25.4	34
Interactionists	14.7	14.3	12
<u>Placeists</u>	13.8	14.3	16
Environmentalists	4.1	3.2	14
No Clear Response	0.9	1.5	0

Geographical Perspective	Morley (2012) <i>% of statements</i>	Puttick et al (2017) <i>% of statements</i>	Sutheran (2020) <i>% of statements</i>
Global “fact finder”	65	51	38
Global “processor”	10	16	24
Interactionist	7	13	12
Facilitator	5	5	4
<u>Placeist</u>	4	13	14
Synthesiser	3	2	8



Lambert (2015) - Powerful Knowledge and the importance of geography



Powerful Disciplinary Knowledge

World Knowledge

The acquisition and development of deep descriptive explanatory 'world knowledge' – may include countries, capitals, population distribution. Dependent on national and regional contexts.

Relational Thinking

Underpins geographical thought; place and space, local and global, the human and physical notions of interdependence and interaction – the big ideas.

Futures

Ability to apply alternative social, economic and environmental futures – draws on skills of decision making, analysis, evaluation – applied geography.

What current barriers reduce the quality of the geography curriculum?



What current barriers reduce the quality of the geography curriculum?

The curriculum - moved to being more knowledge based rather than enquiry based. Curriculum is a bit boring!

Outdated case studies, teaching geography as literacy, limited viewpoints, verging on cultural appropriation, some limited teacher knowledge, lack of details in NC.

Over full curriculum. Too much geography content at KS1&2. National curriculum is too prescriptive

To be honest I have some ideas - but really don't have anyone to verify the suitability of it.

Subject knowledge needs to be deeper for this to be taught to a high standard. Preconceived ideas about Geography from negative experiences in our own education.

Trips, visits and teacher's subject knowledge and passion. In my experience, many teachers enjoy teaching history, but don't have the same passion for geography