

# The Concept of "Powerful Geography:" Its Evolution, Relevance, and Importance in Geographic Education

*Thursday, October 26, 2023 10:20 AM (20 minutes)*

The genesis of "Powerful Geography"—a new concept in teaching and learning—began in the 1980s, during the building of the Applied Geography program in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Texas State University. This presentation discusses the evolution, relevance and importance of the concept of "Powerful Geography," emanating from five distinct time periods: Period 1 revisits the geo-history of applied geography at Texas State and our creation of the Masters of Applied Geography program and degree; Period 2 surveys a host of counseling and career opportunities offered by the American Association of Geographers (AAG); Period 3 presents the underlying concepts of "Powerful Geography" which include Geo-capabilities and Powerful Disciplinary Knowledge, developed by European geographers and now deeply set in European schools and academic universities; Period 4 surveys the efforts of geography education researchers from the Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education who have worked to develop the teaching methods of "Powerful Geography" for U.S. schools, and universities. Finally, Period 5, the Present, asks: Where do we go from here? What are the responsibilities of geography professional education institutions? What are the support needs from school districts and state Boards of Education? The ultimate aim of this paper is to increase awareness of this new "bottom-up" approach to teaching geography which enhances students' understanding of the importance and relevance of geography to their everyday lives, as well as the application of geography in their future careers.

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