

**An exploration of the professional capital of authors who  
recontextualise knowledge about place in English A level geography  
textbooks**

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## Abstract

### **An exploration of the professional capital of authors who recontextualise knowledge about place in English A level geography textbooks**

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Initiated in 2014, A level curriculum reform in England was driven by the government's desire to restore academic rigour, help bridge the school-academy divide and better prepare school leavers for the world of work, university and life in society. Reform provided the opportunity to revise A level textbooks and revive their position in the resource ecology of the classroom. Previous research on geography textbooks focuses on textbook perception and use, curriculum coverage and the representation of place. Yet, there is remarkably little research with the author, rather than textbook, as the central concern. My research fills this gap.

Textbook authors are an important source of data. Drawing on communities of practice and their own accumulated knowledge and expertise, authors select, organise and transform knowledge created in the parent discipline (its methods, prevailing paradigm and knowledge) and society into a format that is appropriate for use at A level. As the discipline of geography is broad and multi-paradigmatic and the process of recontextualisation is complex, my research focuses on understanding the decisions authors make about place selection and knowledge. Place was selected as it is the most central of geographical concepts and a new core unit for the revised A level subject content. This idiographic case study research elicits the views of nine authors, with data generated using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and Q-sort. The latter is currently an under-used methodology in geography education research. By exploring themes developed through reflexive thematic analysis, findings suggest that authors draw on human, social and decisional capital developed through immersion in teaching, assessment and pedagogy. Furthermore, reflective practice is seen to play a key role in the recontextualisation of knowledge, helping authors to utilise opportunities and deal with constraints experienced during the writing process.

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Lastly, my utmost thanks go to my husband Adam and children Katherine and Samuel. Working on my thesis has impacted on us all. Yet, my family have always been my greatest supporters, giving me the time, space and confidence to complete my PhD, while motivating me to keep writing even when it seemed that I still had a mountain to climb.

## Preface

A level curriculum reform in 2014 provided the opportunity to revise geography textbooks and the opportunity to complete research with the authors, rather than textbook, as the central concern. My research focuses on understanding the decisions authors make about place selection and the recontextualisation of knowledge for use by A level teachers and their students. Place was selected as the focus of my research as it is the most central of geographical concepts and a new core unit for the revised A level subject content as decided by a subject panel of academics sitting on the A level Content Advisory Body (ALCAB). My case study research generated data from nine authors using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a Q-sort activity. The latter is currently an under-used methodology in geography education research. By exploring themes developed through reflexive thematic analysis, findings suggest that authors draw on human, social and decisional capital developed through immersion in teaching, assessment and pedagogy while recontextualising knowledge from the discipline and real world for use in a textbook. Furthermore, reflective practice is seen to help authors to utilise opportunities and deal with constraints experienced during the writing process.

My decision to locate authors at the centre of my research, to focus on the concept of place and hear about authors' geographical perspectives were all explicitly made as a result of my professional experience and interests. My PGCE mentor Margaret Roberts, Past President of the Geographical Association (2008-9) and prolific author, trained me to be critical, focus my attention on effective pedagogy and keep geography at the heart of everything that I do. Building on these strong foundations, I taught in a range of schools including a faith school in Bolton, state schools in Sheffield, Chesterfield and Solihull and private schools in Birmingham and the United Arab Emirates. Each of these different settings provided me with a wealth of experience and understanding about curriculum and change, geography teaching and learning, assessment, as well as students and their own experiences.

While in post as the Head of Geography in a British School in Abu Dhabi, I taught Emirate students about unfamiliar geographical concepts such as frontal rainfall, perennial rivers and glaciers and English students with limited experience of England about their home country. This helped me to reflect on the way people conceive and

construct geographical concepts such as place. Furthermore, teaching at a distance from the United Kingdom (UK) increased my awareness of the high proportion of geography case studies at A level which are from England and the narrow representation of more distant places, concepts and processes.

During my time abroad, I completed a transnational Masters in Education from a UK provider with a 'flying faculty' mode of teaching (Smith, 2009). For my thesis, I explored students' conceptions of school geography. This further developed my critical and reflective perspective on how people and places are represented in the classroom and the range of different geographical perspectives students develop during their education. Wanting to maintain connections with other geographers, I blogged about everyday living in the city as part of a London School of Economics postgraduate geography project called *A Season of Urban Vignettes*. In order to disseminate this work, I co-presented a lecture at the Geographical Association Annual Conference (Rawlings Smith and Yee Koh, 2013) and published two articles: 'My Place Abu Dhabi' for *Teaching Geography* (Rawlings Smith, 2013a) and 'Spotlight on...City' for *Geography* (Rawlings Smith, 2013b).

Thinking beyond my own classroom practice led me to contemplate the role and professional capital of authors, as educators in a powerful position to selection and define knowledge for use in school textbooks. Since 2001, I have assessed GCSE and A level examination scripts for three assessment organisations. Since the 2014 A level reform, I have written examination papers and provided examination advice for teachers. This experience taught me to question how knowledge is sourced and legitimised, and of more relevance to this research, to understand who decides on the selection of knowledge, meanings and representations pupils encounter in the classroom. My choice of textbook rather than any other geographical resource was influenced by my experience as a geography textbook author during the last two rounds of GCSE and A level curriculum reform (2008 and 2014). Although rather stressful, I enjoyed and learnt a great deal from the process. Since 2008, I have written four more GCSE and A level textbook chapters, seven journal articles, three chapters in books aimed at geography teachers and numerous papers and geography resources for publishers, assessment organisations and other educational organisations. My author expertise develops with each project as I critically reflect

on my knowledge about subject content, pedagogy and assessment, the originality and purpose of my work and the accessibility, style and structure of my writing.

My PhD research explores the under-researched area of A level Geography authors and their approach to writing textbooks, their geographical perspectives and the decisions they make while selecting and recontextualising textbook content. My research follows an interpretivist approach with the ‘goal of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it’ (Schwandt, 1998, p.221). It celebrates subjective experience, while acknowledging the viewpoints and perspectives of the researchers who are deeply intertwined in the research process (Charmaz, 2014). Of course, there are alternative approaches which I could have taken. One would have been critical realism, an approach which assumes an ultimate reality, but claims that ‘the way reality is experienced and interpreted is shaped by culture, language and political interests’ (Braun and Clarke, 2013, 329). I argue that critical realism, as a philosophy of science, is more closely aligned with scientific investigation and the observation of causal relationships. Whereas I am more supportive of a Weberian interpretivist approach which seeks an ‘understanding (*verstehen*) of the “meaning” of social phenomena’ (Schwandt, 1998, p.221). Schultz (1962 cited in Schwandt, 1998, p.226). suggests that *verstehen* is the process by which we make sense of or interpret our everyday world. This fits well with my research focus, while acknowledging my researcher positionality and subjectivity (discussed in Section 3.4).

Aligned with my theoretical approach, I collected data from a small number of authors of endorsed A level Geography textbooks published in 2016. Selecting authors with comparable and recent writing experiences provided a rich source of data. The decision to limit my sample to A level Geography textbook authors was a purposeful case study strategy. The purpose of my ‘case’ was to explore the process of writing endorsed Geography textbooks published in response to the 2014 A level reforms as experienced by the authors. This fairly homogeneous sample improved the likelihood that patterns in the data could be identified and interpreted through an in-depth investigation, using a range of methods.

My thesis is structured in three parts. Part I, the introduction (Chapter One) and literature review (Chapter Two), sets the scene for my research and outlines my research aims, questions and focus, before providing the context for this study. It

continues with the literature review. This considers different curriculum structures which can be used to frame subject content, the nature of knowledge and Bernstein's message systems, the place and purpose of textbooks and professional capital of authors in their role as recontextualising agents. Part II is the Research Design. It sets out the study aims, philosophical and methodological underpinnings, research methods and analysis and ethical considerations. Part III includes six chapters. The first five chapters present research findings and a discussion, with one research question addressed per chapter. Chapter Nine concludes the study by drawing the research strands together with a summary of the findings, recommendations for policy, practice and further research, plans for further dissemination, research limitations and final conclusions.

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## List of Abbreviations

ALCAB	A Level Content Advisory Board
A level	Advanced level
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
AS level	Advanced Supplementary level
CPD	Continued Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
Edexcel	An assessment organisation part of Pearson plc.
Eduqas	An English brand of the Welsh assessment organisation WJEC
FE	Further Education, post-16 sixth form, college etc.
GA	Geographical Association
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GER	Geography Education Research
HE	Higher Education
HESA	Experts in UK higher education data and analysis
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
JCQ	Joint Council for Qualifications
KS3,4 & 5	Key Stages 3, 4 and 5
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NUT/ATL	National Union of teachers/Association of Teachers and Lectures
OCR	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PA	Publishers Association
PGCE	Post-graduate Certificate in Education
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PDK	Powerful Disciplinary Knowledge
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RGS – IBG	Royal Geographical Society with Institute of British Geographers
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
TES	Times Educational Supplement

## Part I Introduction and Literature Review

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Setting the scene

Why should a PhD thesis focus entirely on the ideas and experiences of textbook authors rather than the text they have published? The answer is complex, due to the historical-social situation in which knowledge is created and shared and relates to the intertwined issues associated with curriculum, knowledge and power. Counsell (2018, p1) argues the point that ‘curriculum is all about power’, she continues:

*Decisions about what knowledge to teach are an exercise of power and therefore a weighty ethical responsibility. What we choose to teach confers or denies power. To say that pupils should learn ‘the best that has been thought and said’ is never adequate. Start the conversation, and questions abound: ‘Whose knowledge?’; ‘Who decides on “best”?’*

Considering the current drive for a knowledge-rich curriculum and the politicisation of educational policy (Gibb, 2017), research with textbook authors is particularly timely. Working as an agent of curriculum change, authors deal with weighty ethical responsibilities, as outlined by Counsell (2018), as they decide what to include or exclude from a textbook. My research contributes to ongoing curriculum debates about whether high quality textbooks can help to improve equity, social mobility and social justice in the UK (Smith, 2010). This is key at a time when 46 per cent of disadvantaged students attend disadvantaged schools<sup>1</sup>(OECD, 2018). Texts focused on education policy and its impact on classroom practice and society more broadly reveal how social mobility is decreasing in Britain (Pring, 2013; Kelly, 2009; Ball 2013a). Yet the purpose of education reform, including the use of high-quality textbooks, sets out to achieve the reverse (Gove, 2013, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> Where other students tend also to be disadvantaged (OECD, 2018)

After taking office in May 2010, the Conservative/Liberal Democratic Coalition government initiated a process of educational reform with the aim of replacing New Labour's progressive educational policy with a more 'rigorous', traditional knowledge-based school education for all. This was taking place at the around the time that Young (2008), based at UCL Institute for Education, was calling to 'bring knowledge back in' to school education. At A level, knowledge had not so much fallen along the wayside to be replaced by generic skills and a 'personalisation' agenda, as was the case, intentionally or not, at Key Stage 3 (Young *et al.*, 2014). Even so, the government saw the need for school reform across all year groups. The ambition for more rigorous A levels necessitated the involvement of academics in the process of curriculum development, realigning the intended A level subject content (DfE, 2010) with the parent discipline. This research regularly refers to the discipline-based knowledge and subject knowledge, the former being a branch of knowledge formed and validated by a specialised community of practice (Bernstein, 2000) and the latter official knowledge selected, interpreted, represented and acquired by learners in school. Discipline-based knowledge is important, because it helps students to view, know, investigate and understand the world in a specialised and scholarly way. The nature of school knowledge is harder to define, that is until the recent curriculum reform when the government asked academics for their guidance on A level subject content. Consequently, re-aligning school knowledge closer to the parent discipline with its 'conceptual coherence' and disciplinary ways of thinking (Muller, 2009, p.205). Engaging with ALCAB moved power away from the assessment organisations, who it was argued held a 'disproportionate role in shaping the school curriculum' (Young, 2011a, p.271), and into the hands of a small number of academics, most of whom knew very little about how schools function.

My idiographic case study research has a dual focus, on knowledge and on authors as 'knowers' (Maton, 2014a). Authors of endorsed A level textbooks are knowers who have accumulated knowledge and work in the liminal space between the intended curriculum of educational policy and the enacted or lived curriculum experienced in the classroom (Tyler, 1949; Aoki, 2005). Their role is to write texts which facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge by selecting and

re-contextualising discipline-based knowledge and putting flesh on the bones of the intended curriculum. Bernstein (2000) defines recontextualisation as the process by which knowledge is taken from one field (Bourdieu, 1993) and transformed for use in another context. In the context of my research, the knowledge being recontextualised is A level subject content which migrates from policy writers and the parent discipline via assessment organisations and textbook authors to geography teachers enacting the curriculum in the classroom. Due to the breadth of subject content geography authors write about, my research has a focus on 'place' - one of geography's key unifying concepts and a central concern in the recently revised A level curriculum (DfE, 2014a).

As well as exploring the recontextualisation of knowledge, this study explores the qualities and capacities of authors, which Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) conceptualise as the three interconnected elements of professional capital; human, social and decisional (Figure 1). Human capital relates to the knowledge textbook authors have accumulated; their understanding built on experience. Social capital is their shared expertise and decisional capital is the ability of authors to prioritise tasks and make effective decisions during writing. Professional capital develops with experience and supports effective decision-making by authors when faced with a multiplicity of choices about subject content and place selection, while coping with a wealth of constraints such as time, space, endorsement and assessment requirements.

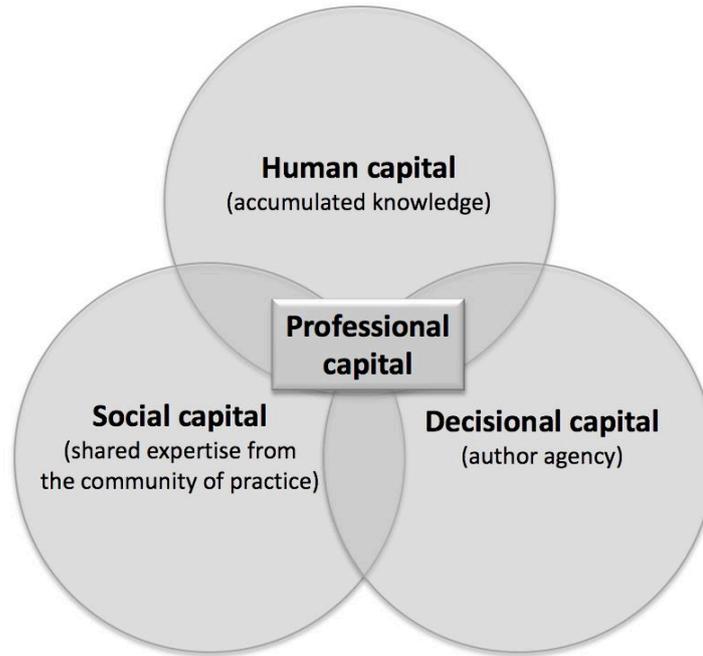


Figure 1 Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) three strands of professional capital

Data was collected from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and a Q-sort activity with nine A level geography authors between June 2016 and January 2017, just after textbooks had been drafted and were in the process of being published. This meant that the process of writing remained fresh in the memory of authors, allowing rich and nuanced descriptions of the writing and decision-making process. My research data highlights the complex nature of the writing process, opportunities and challenges faced by authors and that writing A level geography textbooks requires a complex skill set which authors develop through experience within and beyond the classroom. This thesis contributes to the literature by exploring the under-researched voices of authors as they make sense of the complexities of writing subject content in endorsed A level geography textbooks. Furthermore, it makes a methodological contribution by applying the use of Q methodology to geography education research, expanding the variety of research methods being used in postgraduate geography education research.

Now that the scene for my research is set, Chapter One continues with the research aims and rationale, then moves on to introduce the textbook and situate my research within a changing educational landscape, a result of structural education reform. It concludes with a discussion of the A level curriculum, knowledge and the attempts by academics in the recent reforms to narrow the

divide between school and university. Although the A level reforms I discuss were initiated in 2014, the first teaching of new specifications began in September 2016 and the endorsed textbooks were published in 2016.

## **1.2 Why this research now?**

My research was initially designed to understand the impact of school reform. School reform involves the review and revision of the official pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000) and was explicitly used by the government as a mechanism to realign school geography with its parent discipline (see Section 2.2.3). Calls from politicians and educators for a knowledge-rich school curriculum and advice from a subject panel of academics (ALCAB), influenced the subject content of the revised A level qualifications (Evans, 2014; Wheelahan, 2007; Young, 2008; Gibb, 2014; DfE, 2014a). This new discourse would need to be reflected in the subject content of textbooks and authors would play a key role in this process of recontextualisation. The Bernsteinian concept of recontextualisation is the curricular process by which knowledge produced within a specific historical-social context is taken from its original context and moved into another, with a consequent change of meaning (Bernstein, 2000). In my research, authors work as agents of recontextualisation, albeit influenced by a number of other stakeholders such as the government, assessment organisations and publishers. At times of reform, textbooks ‘can assume prominence’ (Lee and Catling 2016a, p.342) as they provide a conceptual framework for subject content, set the pitch and pace for curriculum coverage, present current pedagogical thinking and support GCSE and A level assessment through activities and practice examination questions (DfE, 2014b; DfE, 2014a). With a new set of textbooks being written for publication in 2016, the opportunity to collect data from authors, at a time when the impact of the 2014 A level reforms remained fresh in their mind, was there for the taking.

The findings of this in-depth case study research will provide valuable insight to those teaching the new A level geography specifications, educators with an interest in understanding the nature of knowledge transmitted in school, those interested in the impact of educational policy and professional capital, educational publishers and of course the community of school textbook authors.

### **1.3 Research aims**

Drawing on the phenomenological thinking of Heidegger (1927, 1993) and employing a qualitative research design (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Flick, 2014; Braun and Clarke, 2013), my thesis presents the perspectives and knowledge, rooted in experience, of a group of expert educators who write A level geography textbooks. The process by which authors move language and discourse (ideas and concepts) from the parent discipline for use in schools was defined by Bernstein (2000) as recontextualisation and is further explored in Section 2.2.2. This process is neither linear nor straightforward. It is akin to producing a film where the script is yet to be written or completing a jigsaw without any pieces (Hirst and Peters, 1974). An author requires a diverse skill set and deep understanding of educational knowledge developed within and beyond classroom practice to be able to write a high-quality geography resource. An author's educational knowledge is gained across Shulman's (1986) five content-specific domains of teacher knowledge which includes subject content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, substantive and syntactic structures of the discipline, and curriculum content knowledge. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, p.1) group these attributes into the three interconnected elements of professional capital, with capital relating to 'assets that can be leveraged to accomplish desired goals'. In education, human capital relates to teachers' knowledge about pedagogy, the subject and the students they teach. Social capital is developed through collaboration and decisional capital is the capacity to make effective decisions in practice. Drawing on Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) work on professional capital and Bernstein's (2000) concept of the pedagogic device, this thesis seeks an in-depth understanding of the process of textbook writing which takes subject content from the A level curriculum (DfE, 2014a) and adapts it for use in textbooks by school teachers and students, from the perspective of the textbook authors.

A range of methods were used to collect data. A questionnaire and drawing task were used to create stimulus material for semi-structured interviews and a Q-sort activity was used to explore authors' subjective views about place. Interviews took place at different times between May 2016 and January 2017, when

participants were available. The sample of nine authors was drawn from a relatively small population of 36 authors who wrote one or more chapters for one of the six endorsed A level textbooks in 2016. Being part of the geography education community provided me with access to A level Geography textbook authors and I identify myself as an ‘informed’ researcher or ‘insider’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). This brought with it the possibility of openness and trust which would have been difficult to replicate if I had been an outsider. My positionality influenced my choice of methodology and methods and is discussed further in Section 3.4. It also encouraged ethical reflection to maintain respect for the authors, remain non-judgemental and safeguard ideas shared in confidence for context, but not necessarily for inclusion in the research findings.

#### **1.4 The research questions**

The two interconnected threads of my case study research focus on the nature and source of knowledge for inclusion in a textbook and the professional expertise of textbook authors. Untangling these threads in the context of A level geography, my research explores how textbook authors understand the concept of place, the sources of their knowledge and the opportunities and constraints of the writing process. As well as the professional expertise and competencies authors draw on when selecting and representing place in endorsed A level geography textbooks. As my research progressed, the research questions which steered my thinking went through several iterations before I settled on those presented here. Arksey and Knight’s (1999) notion of ‘progressive focusing’ aptly describes how I kept reviewing and reformulating these research questions. The final revision occurring during the data analysis stage. At this point, I felt that the initial four research questions could not encompass all the data collected and an additional question focused on social capital was added.

According to Bryman (2012, p.90), research questions should be clear, researchable, linked, have connections with established theory and research and be able to make an original contribution to the topic. I am satisfied that my research questions fulfil these criteria. After clearing ethics and recording interviews with authors, teachers and A level students, I realised that the scope of my study was too broad, this required me to narrow my research focus and drill

down to ensure the overall achievability and clarity of my questions. To make the research enquiry manageable, I used five research questions, which are fully justified in Section 3.2. Each research question focuses on separate but connected areas of study, as follows:

1. What is the nature and source of knowledge authors draw upon while writing an A level geography textbook?
2. How do authors select and recontextualise place in an A level geography textbook?
3. Who in the community of practice inspires and supports authors?
4. How do textbook authors employ their tacit knowledge and decisional capital while writing?
5. What is the purpose of a textbook and a geography education?

Deciding on the wording of each question required careful consideration. As the study has idiographic and interpretative underpinnings, I wanted to ensure that the voices of the authors (their experiences, conceptions and ideas) were central to the research process. The choice of command words was key. The use of ‘how’ and ‘what’ ‘convey an open and emergent design’ (Creswell, 2015, p.140) which is helpful where the focus of the research, as is the ‘case’ (Yin, 2013) here, is underexplored. Key words and concepts used in my research questions will be further explored in the rest of this chapter and the literature review in Chapter 2.

### **1.5 The focus of my research – reconstructing the world in a textbook**

School textbooks are a commercially produced source of subject knowledge and are most usefully defined as a standard book, bought in multiple copies, for the use of teachers and students for a particular course (Waugh, 2000; Westaway and Rawling, 1998; Davey *et al.*, 1995; Lidstone, 1992). In England, there is a tight-knit relationship between textbook and assessment organisation. Assessment organisations write examination specifications and endorse textbooks that cover their specifications. The authors of school textbooks understand this relationship and their role is to write subject content to closely match specification content. Beyond this key constraint, authors have agency to select knowledge.

*Exponential growth in the volume, complexity and sources of knowledge is proclaimed as undermining traditional notions of authority and expertise.*

(Maton, 2014a, p.1)

Even though there is an exponential growth in available knowledge, as noted above, arguably, there is now, more than ever, a greater need for expert authors to sift, organise, conceptually frame and pitch this knowledge in a suitable format for use by students. This is because knowledge<sup>2</sup> is more than chunks of data, facts, information or something ‘to be Googled’, it requires conceptual structuring if it is to be learnt. The conceptual framing of knowledge, along with contemporary case studies and examples is the key reason why school textbooks become a valuable commodity and are a key component of the education landscape (Winter, 2015).

Bernstein (1990, 2000) uses the concept of the pedagogic device to describe the social process by which knowledge is transformed or ‘recontextualised’. He describes three fields in which knowledge is produced, recontextualised and reproduced. The field of knowledge production is associated with, but not exclusive to universities and research institutions. The field of reproduction relates to schools, where pedagogy and curriculum are enacted and knowledge is reproduced. Lastly, the recontextualising field is located between the two and is where textbook authors work to selectively reproduce discourse. McPhail (2016, p.295) describes the pedagogic device as ‘a complex assemblage of processes and interactions that provide the relay for the distribution, recontextualisation, and evaluation of knowledge’. He hints at the complexity of this process and the importance of the recontextualisation field when we consider the highly insulated nature of universities and schools. Knowledge structures (Bernstein, 1996) can help us to understand the pedagogic device: how knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> Knowledge is defined by Bell (1976) as a set of organised facts and ideas, empirical results or reasoned judgements.

is formed (methods), organised (conceptualised) and ultimately transmitted by ‘knowers’.

When discussing knowledge, disciplinary knowledge can be defined as that which is produced in intellectual fields such as university departments (Bernstein, 1990) and professional knowledge is produced as a result of learning through classroom practice, a process Schön (1983) associates with reflection in action. Goodson (2003) describes the practical knowledge teachers develop as knowing rather than knowledge. In the same way, textbook authors’ everyday practice can be described as knowing. Working at the divide between school and the academy, A level textbook authors draw on knowledge from the parent discipline and from the world in which they live. This requires authors to know and understand two educational fields (university and school) while working in the place in-between.

Just like any other commodity under pressure from market forces, textbooks succeed or fail based on their quality. Thus, an author’s professional competence to get a publication right-first-time<sup>3</sup> cannot be underestimated. Understanding how authors apply their professional knowledge or knowing to the process of writing a textbook is key to this research. By understanding the complexity of the process of recontextualisation, this research goes some way towards helping educators to appreciate how knowledge is structured and is effectively disseminated to different audiences, supporting meaning-making and critical-thinking (Biesta, 2017).

## **1.6 The changing educational landscape**

In trying to make sense of how authors select and ensure subject content is appropriate, accessible and well-structured, a cursory overview of the contemporary educational landscape in which textbook production takes place is a necessary first step.

After 13 years of New Labour in control, the shift to a Conservative/Liberal Democratic Coalition government in May 2010 caused

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<sup>3</sup> Right first time is a common proactive principle used by assessment organisations such as OCR to improve quality.

particularly strong reversals in educational policy. Once in office, the Coalition government completed a root and branch review of education and published their proposals in the Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010). The government argued that education was failing significant numbers of young people, who after leaving school were unable to get full-time employment or a place at university. The *White Paper* (DfE, 2010) set out the characteristics of the world's best education systems, then identified solutions which could be applied in England to readdress our international standing. Writing while New Labour were in power, Wiliam (2007) described this kind of approach as 'policy tourism'. Ball (2012) more recently uses the term 'policy transfer' to describe the government's search for solutions from beyond our borders. According to Oates (2014, p.3), the use of high-quality textbooks is one such solution which could help to solve our educational 'problems'. Such a causal relationship between policy and assessment outcomes is difficult to prove in a complex system like education and yet policy discourse has increasingly relayed this message since 2010 (Ofqual, 2012; Gibb, 2014).

Subsequent to the publication of the Education *White Paper*, the government decided that a whole-system reform with 'profound structural change and rigorous attention to standards' (DfE, 2010, p.7) was not only necessary, but also well overdue. Reforms did not tinker around the edges, they cut right across the public sector and were ideological, political, structural and fiscal, and the reasons for this 'external manipulation' (Kelly, 2009) became increasingly complex and opaque. Neoliberal market forces were increasingly felt in schools, through such doctrines as competition, accountability and standards (Pring, 2013; Ball, 2013a). Having developed his ideas about policy technology mechanisms of educational reform (market, managerialism and performativity) over a decade, Ball (2013a, p.1) notes that 'educational policy is increasingly thought about and made within the context of the "pressures" and requirements of globalisation' and designed to reimagine education and 'what it means to be educated' (Ball, 2013a, p.9). If schools did not choose academy-conversion<sup>4</sup>, then poor Ofsted inspection

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<sup>4</sup> The process by which a school changes governance, being operated outside of local authority control, with funding direct from central government.

outcomes were used to force them to convert to an academy anyway. The uneasy relationship between politics, economy and education was becoming increasingly complex and the magnitude of change had an effect on the entire sector.

With aspirations to broaden and balance the school curriculum, the government introduced the six-subject English Baccalaureate (EBacc) GCSE performance measure in 2010 to encourage the uptake of traditional subjects such as geography rather than arts subjects (DfE, 2010). In just five years (2012-2017), the GCSE curriculum was seen to narrow<sup>5</sup>. Fewer students opted for creative GCSEs and a number of arts subjects became unviable as more students opted for geography and the subject faced a full-scale revival. As Lambert (2011, p.243) suggests, the inclusion of geography in the EBacc not only indicated the ‘subject’s status as a component of a rounded education’, but it had the effect of raising the status of the subject. This revival was replicated at A level due to the larger pool of students who were able to opt for the subject, with numbers increased from 33,007 in 2014 to 37,814 in 2017 (JCQ, 2019b). The situation was not to last. In the year after AS levels were de-coupled from A levels, no longer the first year of a two-year course, a ten per cent fall in examination entries was recorded in 2018. Although, A level entries rebounded slightly to 34,960 in 2019 (JCQ, 2019b).

In the context of the school curriculum, reform is a useful mechanism to keep subject matter relevant, support a range of educational agendas and offer young people something meaningful while at school (Chang and Kidman, 2019; Evans, 2014; Castree, 2005). Some innovative examination courses such as OCR’s Pilot GCSE and Edexcel 16-19 did challenge traditional school geography. However, they were a minority. The Pilot GCSE made steps to engage with ideas from the geographies being taught in university, within a well-considered and cohesive content framework (Wood, 2009). With a limited uptake, the Pilot’s longevity was brief. Yet, it highlighted what type of geography was possible when a curriculum is carefully considered. The Edexcel 16-19 Geography course followed an enquiry-based approach which structured subject content around key geographical questions (Digby, 2013; Lofthouse, 2011). Informed by a group of

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<sup>5</sup> The number of Geography students rose by 58,942 to 245,964 (2012-2017) and the number of Design and Technology students fell by 74,889 to 165,815 (JCQ, 2019a).

academics, the 2014 A level curriculum realigned subject content with disciplinary knowledge. However, recent pedagogical developments in school education were somewhat under-represented in policy documents, as subject knowledge was prioritised. Geographical enquiry, for example, was not explicitly referenced (DfE, 2014a).

Reform could have been used as a vehicle for the government to empower teachers as curriculum-makers (GA, 2012). Biddulph *et al.* (2015) hoped that reform would present school geography as more than a list of content requirements, but they were somewhat disappointed. Specialised concepts forming an overarching conceptual framework were identified, yet, the core content was organised in discrete topics rather than conceptually and therefore remained very much siloed. This organisational structure of knowledge into bite-size chunks encouraged teachers to play the role of technician rather than curriculum-maker to ‘deliver’, not make, the curriculum (Biddulph *et al.*, 2015).

Education reform was changing the structure of the school system. Certain initiatives, such as the Academy programme, set in motion by New Labour, were rolled out across the nation. School governance was diversified and shifted power away from local authorities to academy chains, with ultimate power resting with the Department for Education. This quasi-privatisation of state education was occurring quickly. By January 2019, academisation had affected 72.3 per cent of secondary pupils (Roberts and Danechi, 2019, p.1). The government also diversified routes into teaching by reallocating initial teacher education places through Schools Direct and other schools-based routes rather than through higher education institutions. This mechanism of ‘improving choice’ (Carter, 2015) has had the dual effect of reducing stability in provision and the ability of institutions to plan effectively until annual allocation announcements (Digby, 2013; Universities UK, 2014; DfE, 2017). At the same time as reform, austerity caused real-terms pay and funding cuts for staff. For a multitude of reasons, including those mentioned here, teacher recruitment targets have not been met since 2012. More teachers have left the profession in 2015-17 than were recruited and over 600,000 pupils are said to be taught lessons by unqualified teachers; a situation which is legal, but not ideal (Pells, 2017). No-degree teaching apprenticeships are seen as a further move to vocationalise teacher training, shifting the pedagogical

site into schools with a consequent reduction in access to disciplinary knowledge, academics and their methods (Whittaker, 2016). Such a move is potentially cognitively restricting as trainee teachers are less likely to be exposed to critical pedagogy during their training (Freire, 1970).

Beck (2013, p.181) suggests that coercive de-professionalisation can be 'seen as a much wider set of policies designed to disempower professions'. Yet it has been encouraged by the government, on the grounds that 'trainability' provides a workforce with 'a passive willingness to accept "doses" of training and re-training' (Beck, 2013, p.181). Why should this matter? Textbook writers begin their career as classroom teachers and if they set out as unqualified 'competent craftspersons' (Moore, 2004, p.5), rather than university-educated scholar-teachers then their training will not include a connection with disciplinary approaches, methods and community and they will have to build these links later. The participants in this research have been teaching for at least a decade and can be described as scholar-teachers. The same is not necessarily true for early-career teachers.

Writing in *The Guardian*, Ball (2013b) suggests that the fragmentation of the education system 'pursued in the name of choice, diversity and autonomy' has resulted in a 'patchwork of uneven and unequal provision that existed prior to the 1870 Education Act', Such a 'fuzzy' education system lacks transparency, local oversight and connections with democracy (Ball, 2013b). Consequently, mismanagement has resulted in some academy trusts giving up control of their schools and in extreme cases closure<sup>6</sup>. Such examples of poor governance hint that structural reforms have not been entirely successful. Yet, the Conservatives have suggested that reforms raise standards, improve social mobility and provide 'more choice' and 'more competition' for providers and parents alike (Cameron, 2011). According to Conservative ministers, school reforms have been able to 'command the respect of leading universities', 'enhance the reputation of A-

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<sup>6</sup> 91 Academy Trusts have closed or are in the process of closing since 2014, this includes Perry Beeches Academy Trust which in 2016 had a £2.1 million deficit (Staufenberg, 2018; Robertson and Dickens, 2018).

levels' and 'address the pernicious damage caused by grade inflation and dumbing down' (Gove, 2013, 2014). Such claims are not shared by all.

According to Nick Gibb MP (2014), if education is failing young people, then structural change and a knowledge-led curriculum is the solution. It is perhaps too early in the reform cycle to have any rigorous evidence to support his assertion. On the topic of school reform, Christine Blower, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers wrote in *The Guardian* that such an unmanageable level of change 'could lead to a collapse of the system' (Meikle, 2013). Oates (2010) asserts that frequent reforms impact on curriculum development, as teachers focus on *what to teach* informed by revised specifications rather than the more structured activity of *how to teach* informed by reflective practice. Oates would rather slow curriculum change to allow the development, review and rewriting of educational resources such as textbooks, to improve resource quality and educational outcomes. This conclusion is also drawn by Askew *et al.* (2010) after researching maths education in high-performing countries. Drawing on empirical research from four secondary schools in London and the work of Brooks (2012), Mitchell (2016) suggests that curriculum change, accountability pressures and heavy workloads are causing problems for teachers and have been accentuated by the simultaneous introduction of new GCSEs and A levels.

In order to support curriculum change, teachers can turn to informal community-written resources or formal 'top down' educational resources such as textbooks, online professional resources and teacher training events. The government and publishing industry have increasingly championed textbooks as a key resource for teachers during reform (DfE, 2014c; Gibb, 2014; Publishers Association, 2015a), but this advocacy is not universal. Textbooks are seen to challenge teacher autonomy, as the power to educate shifts from the teacher to textbook and can impact on pedagogical choices (Kelly, 2009; Ball, 2013a). Textbooks are expensive. The price reflects expert input, quality assured content and a publication-standard product. Unsurprisingly, in a study conducted in the US, Tesfaye and White (2014) conclude that funding is a common barrier to textbook use. Ball (2012, p127) raises concerns about 'the wholesale commodification of education and educational processes' by for-profit organisations. He notes that companies like Pearson Education, the world's

largest education company, operate across all three of Bernstein's (2000) educational message systems (pedagogy, curriculum and assessment), therefore profit from educational resource sales and assessment practices, while having the power to influence education policy. The ethics of a one-stop shop for education is somewhat questionable.

The education community including learned societies, subject associations and teacher networks have tried to solve the problem of rapid curriculum change by producing a variety of low-cost educational resources. Some material is free, some comes at a small price such as a membership fee. As an increasing amount of content can be stored online and social media allows teachers to be virtually connected, Brooks (2012) may be right to suggest that geography teachers will increasingly draw on professional networks to collaborate, support and share their practice, when responding to changing contexts and policy frameworks.

### **1.7 A brief history of university geography**

Geography is a relatively young university discipline, without a singular identity. Prior to the twentieth century, geographers working in the field such as Cook and Wallace were more likely to identify themselves as naturalists-navigators, explorers or scientific travellers. These practitioners tended to be educated in the sciences, affluent and well-connected members of London's scientific societies. One such society, the Royal Geographical started in 1830 as a dining club. Today, the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) has a membership of over 16,500 and its publications, research groups and lectures reach millions of people (RGS, 2018). Through the annual presentation of prestigious medals, the RGS would confer legitimation on the work of geography's practitioners' (Livingstone, 1992). Yet in the society's early years, geography did not have its place as a separate university discipline. This was to change, when in 1887, the society sponsored Mackinder as Reader in Geography at Oxford. Mackinder (cited in Livingstone, 1992, p.191) saw geography 'as the meeting-point between the sciences of nature and of man' and this definition would provide the basis for a unified discipline with its identity and institutional independence. Over time, Geography emerged as a result of studies underpinned by a number of paradigms including environmentalism and regionalism, with

Humbolt, Ratzel and Ritter exploring Earth surface processes in Germany and Vidal de la Blanche studying and classifying geographical space in France. Of note here and developed in Section 2.2.8 is how the concept of place became the core of geographical study as a result of the work of Sauer within regionalism. It is the importance of this concept to the discipline which is my reason for selecting place as the focus for my research. By the early twentieth century, geography was a well-established school subject and the increasing demand for educated geography teachers necessitated formal university training. The 1944 Education Act raised the school leaving age to 15 and further increased the demand for educated school teachers. To meet this need, geography departments permeated almost every British university. In the post-1945 era university geography diversified and the disciplinary identity shifted as competing paradigms fought for prominence. Without a single history of geography, texts such as *The Geographical Tradition* (Livingstone, 1992) and *Unifying Geography: Common Heritage, Shared Future* (Matthews and Herbert, 2004) provide a much more detailed history of the development of the discipline than can be presented here. The changing conceptualisation of place in the discipline is outlined in Section 2.2.7 and Section 2.2.8, as this is the geographical concept explored in my research. I will now provide a brief history of the A level qualification.

### **1.8 A brief history of A levels**

Advanced levels (A levels), first introduced into the UK in 1951, had the purpose of providing a qualification for university entrance, although this was only aimed at a minority of academic students (Hartley-Brewer, 2015), as rates of participation in higher education in 1950 were low at around 3.4 per cent (Bolton, 2012). These students were being selected from newly formed grammar schools, created as another consequence of the 1944 Education Act, which reorganised secondary education within a tripartite system of grammar, technical and secondary-modern schools. By allocating children to different kinds of schools after an examination at 11, Butler's 'education for all' (Walford, 2001) was to have a massive impact on the life chances and opportunities of children, particularly those from lower socio-economic groups. In 1960, at the height of the tripartite system, there were 3,837 Secondary Moderns, 1,268 Grammars and 251

Technical schools (Mitchell, 1996), yet less than 100,000 candidates or 11.1 per cent of the cohort sat A level examinations. The three kinds of schools had different aims and purposes, received unequal funding, followed different curricula and provided access to different kinds of knowledge and training. General Certificate of Education Advanced levels (A levels) are a school leaving qualification designed with an emphasis on academic and study skills in preparation for entry to university (DfE, 2014a). There are around 80 A level subjects offered by the four main assessment organisations in the UK. Although the school leaving age is currently 17, A levels are not compulsory. Young people can decide to leave school at 16 to follow more vocational routes of training and education. When students achieve GCE A level or equivalent qualifications such as the Diploma Programme International Baccalaureate (IB) or Scottish Advanced Higher, they can then advance to university.

The educational landscape in which A level qualifications now find themselves has significantly changed since their inception. This includes the demise of the universal tripartite school system in the 1970s, the expansion of comprehensive education, an increase in the minimum school leaving age from 16 in 1972 to 18 in 2020 (Ball, 2013a) and widening participation of higher education. Blair's Labour Government set a target for half of 17 to 30-year-olds to go to university (Ball, 2013a). This increased the diversity of students taking A levels and meant that the qualification which was only meant to be followed by the brightest students was revised to be more inclusive. Furthermore, facilitating subjects such as geography were highlighted by Russell Group universities, as subjects students should opt for at A level to enable their progress to university or employment (Dilnot, 2018).

At the same time that the nature of A level candidates was changing, the 'knowers' (Bernstein, 1996) writing and assessing the qualification was shifting. According to Castree *et al.* (2007), A levels were increasingly becoming disconnected from academia. A number of forces were at work and have since intensified. Prior to 1986, examination syllabuses were determined by universities. In 1986, Higher Education (HE) assessment organisations were merged and 'lost control' (Cannadine *et al.*, 2011) over school assessment. Today, the largest assessment organisation in England (AQA) is an educational charity.

Edexcel is an arm of a multinational publishing company (Pearson) and Eduqas is run by the independent Welsh Joint Education Committee (Digby, 2013). Only Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (OCR) remains linked to a university (Cambridge). This loss of control reduced the input of academics in the examination specifications, assessment and textbook materials. Academics now have less time for activities related to A levels. University departments are encouraged to publish high-quality internationally excellent (3\*) or world-leading (4\*) research. Research judged to be internationally excellent (3\*) has risen from 37 per cent to 50 per cent between 2008 and 2014 (Research Excellence Framework, 2014). Writing higher quality research takes longer and is prioritised over contributing to teaching journals or getting involved in knowledge exchange with school teachers and students (Hill and Jones, 2010). The lack of academic involvement in school geography left its mark.

Academics were not the only ones affected by time constraints. In schools, teachers dealing with increased workloads and pressure had less time available to seek support from academics, read accessible academic books and journals or get involved in quality curriculum-making activities (GA, 2012; Mitchell, 2016). In other words, issues of managerialism, performativity and accountability within school education (Ball, 2013a) limited the number of activities which connected school and university. Inevitably, the gap between the two widened (Tate and Sword, 2013; Digby, 2013; Butt and Collins, 2018).

Over the years, a number of academics have made claims about the nature of the school-university divide and its impact on students (Goudie, 1993; Pointon, 2008; Mathison and Woodward, 2013). Others have used professional journals as a mouthpiece to encourage co-operation and collaboration between geographers across the divide. Writing in the Geographical Association's *Geography* journal, Hill and Jones (2010) describe the nature of the A level/HE divide in relation to the 'who', 'what', 'how' and 'where' of geography teaching and learning and conclude with a call to arms. Although they are under no illusion that issues of time, reward and budget can dampen enthusiasm for A level-university boundary crossing, they set out a variety of practical suggestions as to how teachers and academics can share their ideas, knowledge and skills. If we consider that A level reforms are one way to narrow the school-university divide, making the transition

to university smoother for students and supporting mass higher education which can increase productivity in our knowledge society, we must also consider that academic input is integral to the success of this process (Castree *et al.*, 2007; Marriott, 2007; Tate and Sword, 2013; Castells, 2000). The involvement of ALCAB in school reforms provided the government with a mechanism to achieve these ambitions.

## **1.9 Summary**

Chapter One sets the scene for my thesis. It introduced my research topic on A level Geography textbooks, in the context of the reform of A level curricula, from the viewpoint of their authors. The chapter then outlined my research questions and the two interconnected threads running through my research: the selection and recontextualisation of knowledge about place for inclusion in a textbook and the professional expertise of textbook authors. It then provided an overview of the changing educational landscape in the UK and a brief history of university geography and A levels. The chapter concludes by outlining how the rest of this thesis is organised.

Chapter Two, concludes Part I of the thesis and provides an exploration of the literature, providing the reader with an understanding of the research context. It starts with a discussion about curriculum and the ‘knowledge turn’ in education (Lambert, 2011). Drawing on the work of Bernstein (1990, 1996, 2000), the literature review presents the first element of the conceptual framework which focuses on how authors recontextualise knowledge in an A level geography textbook. It moves on to explore the purpose and place of these texts in the current education system. The literature review moves on to discuss the tripartite concept of professional capital which, when combined with Bernstein’s (2000) pedagogic device, forms the conceptual framework. Chapter Two concludes with a visualisation of my conceptual framework. Part II (Chapter Three) details the research design, starting with the research questions, philosophical and methodological underpinnings and methods used for my small-scale case study research. It then describes the data analysis process and concludes with ethical considerations and reflections on my pilot study. Part III of this thesis is made up of six chapters. Chapter Four to Chapter Eight present the research findings and

discussion, one research question per chapter. Chapter Nine is the conclusion, including a summary of my findings, plans for dissemination, research limitations, recommendations for policy and practice and concluding remarks.

In the same way that a student reading a textbook would wish to navigate logically to particular content, I would like the reader of my thesis to do the same. During one of the author interviews, reference was made to Sui's (2016, p.482) idea that 'self-reference acts as a golden thread in binding'. I adapted this idea and created a visual representation of the golden thread running through my research (Figure 2). This thread binds the different stages of a complex process (Sui, 2016), and will be referenced at relevant points in my thesis to signpost the key elements of my research and what is included in the chapter ahead (Crotty, 1998). This is a useful tool for maintaining focus and ensuring research transparency and coherence. The latter two being key aspect of Yardley's (2000) essential qualities of qualitative research.

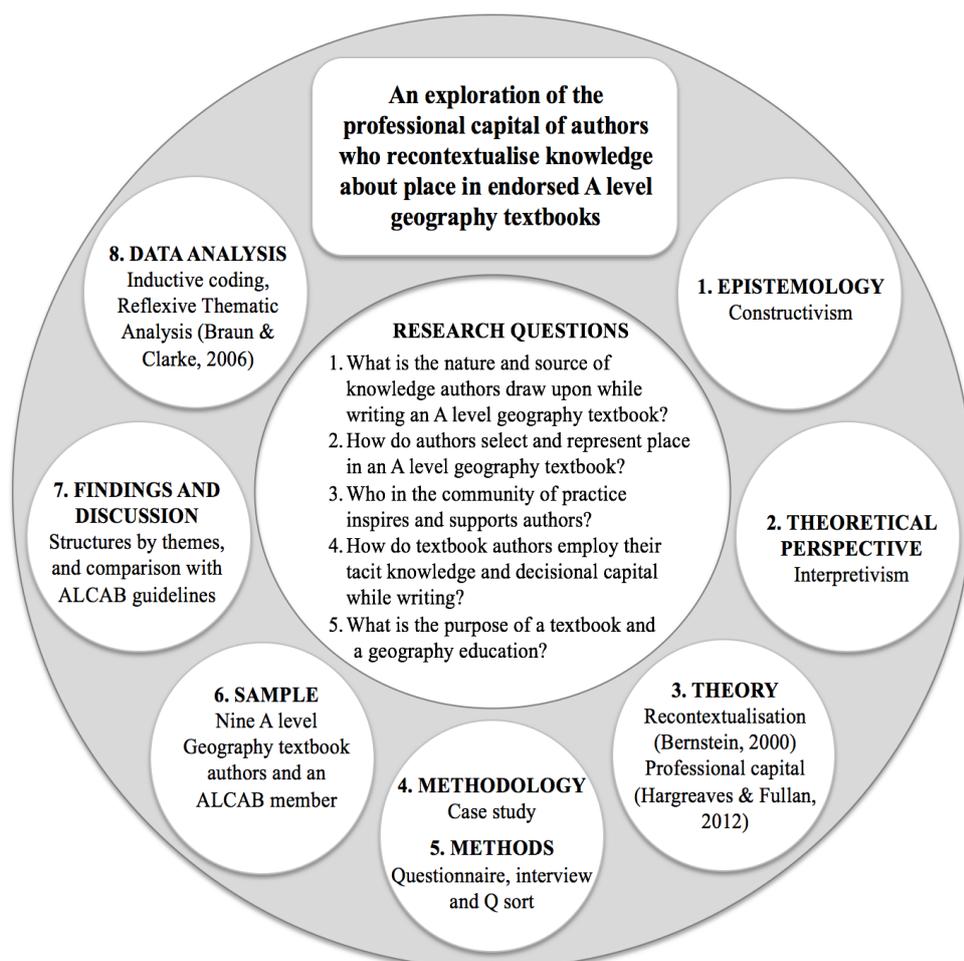


Figure 2 The golden thread which runs through my research

## **2 Review of the Literature**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In my review of the literature, I focus on curriculum, knowledge, textbooks and the professional capital of textbook authors. I begin with a discussion of the knowledge turn in education, curriculum reform, curriculum framing and the pedagogic device. I then move on to look at academic and school geography, focusing on the concept of place, to provide the context for my research and the arena in which textbook authors work. The chapter continues by exploring the purpose and role of school textbooks and the professional capital required by authors to effectively recontextualise place in geography textbooks. The chapter concludes with the conceptual framework which structures the rest of my thesis.

### **2.2 Curriculum and Knowledge**

Throughout my career as a secondary school geography teacher, knowledge has been the central concern in each lesson, yet this belief was not always shared by other teachers. While lesson planning, I would always pause, shut my eyes and hear the words of Margaret Roberts, my PGCE geography mentor, saying ‘Where is the geography?’. This simple question helped shape me into a teacher who places knowledge at the core of practice, uses real-world evidence and continues to build on pupils’ previous learning each lesson. My stance was no doubt informed by my own education and a teaching timetable dominated with GCSE and A level examination groups who needed to cover a substantial amount of subject content. My preoccupation with providing students with a rich geographical education has somewhat insulated me from the political agendas, guidance, frameworks and strategies introduced into the National Curriculum<sup>7</sup> by New Labour with the intention to improve school education.

#### **2.2.1 *The ‘knowledge turn’ in education***

As the perceived failings of New Labour’s liberal educational policies were coming to light, a number of academics, including Basil Bernstein and Michael

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<sup>7</sup> The National Curriculum (NC) was, prior to academisation, compulsory for all Key Stage 1 to 3 state school students. Academies do not have to follow the NC. Geography is only taught at Key Stage 4 if students opt to take it as an examination subject.

Young, were becoming more vocal about the place of knowledge in the school curriculum. Young's 2008 book *Bringing Knowledge Back In* was the product of a long career and intellectual concern with the theory of curriculum and constructionist approach to the nature of knowledge. Years earlier and drawing on the work of Mannheim, Young (1971) makes the case for sociological approaches to the curriculum in *Knowledge and Control*. He asserts that all knowledge is socially produced for a particular purpose. In other words, what counts as knowledge and is selected for inclusion in the curriculum reflects the interests of those in positions of power. This means that post-16 curricula which have traditionally been a stepping stone to university via A level examinations was in the 1980s and 1990s diversified with the expansion of vocational education and linked to students' future employability. Writing in 1998, Young (p.5) observes changes in the organisation of work and society, theorising that educators should reflect critically on the curriculum, asking 'what should be the principles of the curriculum of the future?' and having concern for new forms of knowledge relationships in school and between educational institutions. Young's (2008) move to 'bring knowledge back in' was a call to educators to respond to the concerns he had raised a decade earlier.

### **2.2.2 Curriculum framing and the pedagogic device**

Before exploring Young's curriculum of the future (1998, 2008), it is relevant for this study to discuss some of Bernstein's theoretical concepts, particularly those related to his analysis of curriculum framing and the pedagogic device, a useful lens through which to view the interconnection between curriculum and the nature of knowledge. Inspired by developments in the sociology of knowledge and in particular the work of French sociologist Durkheim, Bernstein (1971, p.47) suggests in his paper *On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge* that educational knowledge can 'be realised through three message systems: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation' (Figure 3). Very simply, curriculum is 'what' should be taught and pedagogy, a related concept, refers to 'how' the curriculum should be taught. Roberts (2013, p.8) does not think that curriculum can be separated from pedagogy 'for what students learn and how they learn are inextricably linked'. Similarly, Bernstein (1971, p.47) posits that 'curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what

counts as a valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realisation of this knowledge'. Young and Muller (2010) see pedagogy as an activity carried out at the local scale by teachers, in much the same way as Lambert and Morgan (2010) outline the professional practice of curriculum-making and the design of learning opportunities by teachers. In contrast, Alexander (2004) 'argues for an understanding of pedagogy that is broader than teaching strategies or approaches but also incorporates decisions about curriculum, or the selection of content' (Brooks, 2012, p.298).

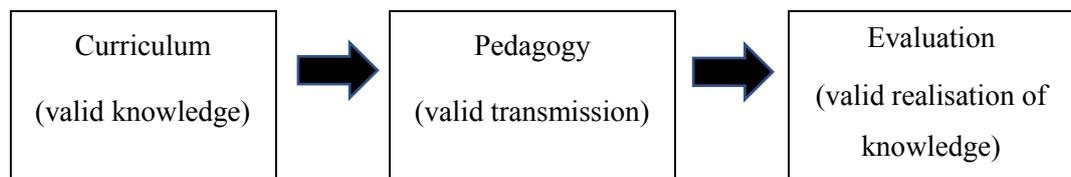


Figure 3 Bernstein's three message system (1971)

The process of pedagogy or the valid transmission of knowledge is key to my research. In everyday language, transmission is generally understood as the one-way movement of something such as knowledge. Pedagogic discourse refers to the geographical content and competences to be transmitted as well as the process by which they are transmitted. Young and Muller (2010, p.15) posit that 'the cultural or knowledge transmission that is associated with education is a much more complex process that involves the active role of the 'recipients' in making the knowledge their own'. This position reinforces my understanding of knowledge as being socially constructed.

At A level, these message systems are strongly influenced by a number of agents, particularly assessment organisations who are responsible for writing the examination specifications which structure, order and legitimise knowledge and assess how well students have learnt specific subject content. Seeing subject content from a pedagogical perspective is an essential characteristic of a textbook writer and being able to embed what should be taught (the curriculum and the knowledge) and how (pedagogy), into words, is essential if textbooks are to be a valuable curriculum resource for teachers. Knowledge is classified or defined in different ways according to the pedagogic field in which it is being created, transmitted or acquired. Both Bourdieu (1993) and Bernstein (1990) apply the concept of field to describe the social space of competition, where a number of

educational agencies such as the government, universities, assessment organisations, teacher education organisations and publishers work to pedagogise knowledge. Drawing on the work of Max Weber, Bernstein (1996, 2000) describes the ordering and disordering principles of this process as the pedagogic device which constitutes the relay, rules or procedures used to convert knowledge into pedagogic communication or ‘the pedagogic code and the rules that mediate its enactment’ (Wheelahan, 2005 p.1).

Bernstein’s (2000, p.32) theoretical framework establishes that pedagogic discourse is in fact made up of an intertwined conceptual pair involving the regulative discourse (RD) and instructional discourse (ID) (Figure 4). In the case of school geography, the regulative discourse is the precondition for knowledge transmission, a discourse of order and standards referring to conduct, character and manners, ‘whereby the social relations of transmission and acquisition are constituted, maintained, reproduced and legitimated’ (Pedro, 1981 cited in Bernstein, 1990, p.211). The instructional discourse is the curriculum content, as Morais (2002, p.560) explains, it is ‘a discourse of competence that refers to *what* is transmitted’ and includes theories, facts and knowledge sourced from the parent discipline.

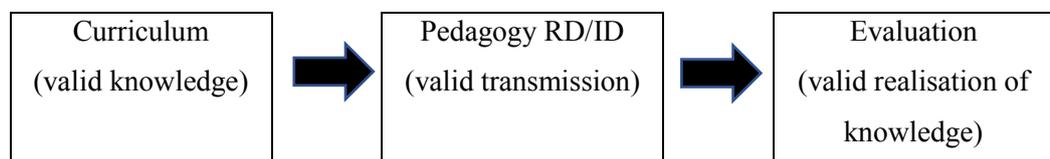


Figure 4 Bernstein’s conceptual pair of the regulative and instructional discourse

### 2.2.3 *The pedagogic fields*

Bernstein (2000) identifies and stratifies pedagogic fields into three different and hierarchically-related fields, namely, the fields of production, recontextualisation and reproduction (Table 1). In intellectual fields, new knowledge is produced as a result of research and identifiable as the product of a particular department, discipline or particular group of ‘knowers’ (Bernstein, 2000). By contrast, educators working in learned societies, subject associations, publishing houses and teacher education institutions are positioned below the field of knowledge production and recontextualise knowledge in a suitable, accessible and structured form ready for reproduction in schools and colleges. In addition, Bernstein (2000)

distinguished between the official recontextualising field (ORF) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) due to level of power held and the role of agents in the pedagogic field (Table 1). The state and assessment organisations are positioned in the ORF as they publish the subject content which A level students are required to learn. Textbooks are educational resources which you would expect to be a product of the PRF. However, as they are legitimised by the assessment organisations' endorsement process, they hold greater power than other resources, often being used as reference material for examination standardisation and marking.

Table 1 A summary of Bernstein's (2000, p.37) pedagogic device

Rules / principle discourses	Religious Field Position	Agent in Pedagogic Field	Field / Process
Distributive	Prophet	Producers of the knowledge – (knower) academic geographer/ formal curriculum	Production / Creation
Recontextualising	Priest	Recontextualiser of knowledge ORF: the state and assessment organisations PRF: textbook authors and teachers	Recontextualisation/ Transmission
Evaluative	Laity	Acquirer of reproduced knowledge learner/A level student	Reproduction/ Acquisition

The three positions in the religious field (of prophets, priests and laity) provide analogies to the producer, reproducer and acquirer in the pedagogic field (Table 1). These positions can help us to understand the relationship learners (acquirers) have with textbook writers and teachers (reproducers of curriculum knowledge) and the knowers or producers of curriculum knowledge (academic geographers and curriculum writers). When exploring the field of school subjects through the theoretical lens offered by Bernstein's (2000) pedagogic device, Puttick (2015a p.481) concludes that chief examiners hold considerable power over school geography as they assume both the positions of prophet and priest and are 'actively involved in the construction of distributive, recontextualising, and evaluative rules'. Here, I argue that textbook authors also hold a degree of power over school geography, particularly in classrooms where teachers rely heavily on textbooks. With this in mind, it is critical that the decisions authors make while

recontextualising subject content into a textbook are based on their experience of teaching, examining and writing and draw on academic geography and real-world evidence. How textbooks are actually used in geography classrooms is understudied. Research exploring how teachers choose to use texts in teaching and learning would help to understand the nature of influence and degree of power held by geography textbook authors over school geography.

In setting out the three pedagogic fields, Bernstein (2000) suggests that the boundaries insulating these fields are strong and those working in a particular field develop specialised identities. The identities of educators working in the field of recontextualisation are not only specialised, they are also hierarchical. Bernstein (1971) introduces the concept of curriculum framing to identify how knowledge is selected, transmitted and assessed in the classroom. Applying his ideas to the context of geography education, it can be suggested that those with power to define knowledge for use in the classroom include a range of players, each with a different identity, role and position of power. Institutional players include the government who create and legislate subject content and assessment organisations who write the examination specifications and create assessment using coursework and examinations. Their key purpose is to establish an entitlement and standards, and promote continuity, coherence and public understanding (QCDA, 2011). Publishers and authors of endorsed textbooks have little control over the core subject content. However, they can legitimise non-core subject content such as the choice of case studies, places and examples used to exemplify content as well as the order and framework used to organise subject content and the questions which guide student activities. Although the teacher is seen as the player with the least power in the hierarchy listed here, they are ultimately most responsible for providing access and controlling what knowledge is transmitted in school and acquired by students.

#### **2.2.4 *Changing approaches to curriculum and knowledge***

In the context of the information age (Castells, 2000; Maton, 2014a), the Coalition government felt the need to be proactive if they were going to reassert the place of knowledge in schools. In the preceding era of ‘assessment-led educational reforms’ (Hargreaves, 1989, p.99), sophisticated forms of assessment gave way to ‘somewhat simplistic tests’ (Kelly, 2009, p.18). The *White Paper* (DfE, 2010)

raises concerns about how students and teachers were playing the education system to obtain better outcomes and life chances. Modular exams were being sat multiple times to improve grades and students no longer had to retain subject content across the two years of an A level course. Examination specifications had effectively raced to the bottom, in terms of the least subject content possible, to gain a market share of customers. This was not helped by the actions of some examiners. Steph Warren, a chief examiner, commented that teachers should pick her company's examination because 'you don't have to teach a lot...in fact, there's so little [in the specification] we don't know how we got it through [Ofqual: the examination regulator]' (Telegraph, 2011). This action, however unprofessional, highlights an ongoing debate about examinations apparently getting easier. For 23 years to 2011, GCSE examination grades improved and for A levels, results improved year-on-year for three decades. The Smith review of Post 16 education (Smith, 2014, p.20) concludes that subject content was 'outdated' and 'the level of challenge in the A Level was not high enough'.

According to Young and Muller (2010), knowledge was side-lined in the school curriculum and needed repositioning as a central concern through substantial structural reform; the justification for this was to allow access to knowledge and education for all as a means of social mobility. Bernstein (2000) theorises that for democracy to be realised, learners must have the right to personal, social and intellectual enhancement, social inclusion and civic participation. Furthermore, he suggests that the nature of knowledge should be challenging, yet accessible, and relevant to life in contemporary society. Social mobility is a complex phenomenon which requires more than a knowledge-rich education. It requires a fair society and investment in education and social care to for the less privileged to overcome barriers and have access to educational and career opportunities (Beck, 2013).

Academic geographers were also concerned with the nature of knowledge in the school subject, their own separation from the process of writing school examination specifications and the perceived chasm between school and the academy (Mathison and Woodward, 2013; Hill and Jones, 2010; Keylock, 2006). Scholars also claim that all young people have the right to powerful disciplinary knowledge (Young, 2008; Lambert, 2011; Firth, 2013; Young *et al.*, 2014). In the

following quote, Butt (2017, p.23) makes the convincing point that knowledge taught in school should be closely aligned with disciplinary knowledge.

*What is clear is that the discipline of geography must serve as the foundation from which school children understand the subject's intellectual traditions and ways of thinking, and that teachers must realise the implications of having these disciplinary roots for curriculum making and teaching in schools.*

Providing access in schools to powerful disciplinary knowledge alone might not necessarily improve social mobility. However, it would at least reduce the chasm between the school and the academy.

#### **2.2.5 Curriculum scenarios and the nature of knowledge**

*Knowledge is described as a defining feature of modern societies, but what that knowledge is, its forms and its effects, are not part of the analysis.*

(Maton, 2014a, p.2)

If we consider that learning is a 'knowledge-forming activity', that knowledge should be placed at the centre of the curriculum (Scott, 2014, p.14) and that the purpose of a school education is to develop young people intellectually and prepare them for the world of work, university and life in society (Gibb, 2014; Gove, 2014), then the curriculum questions to be asked are – What geographies should be taught at A level? How should they be taught? And who should decide what should be taught?

When Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, set about reforming the school curriculum in 2010, he shifted the organising structure from skills to subject knowledge (DfE, 2011; DfE, 2013; Brown and White, 2012) and swung curriculum attention away from constructivist pedagogies towards more traditional ones. This reorganisation was based on the assumptions that child-centred learning and progressive ideology was somewhat less desirable than direct instruction and traditional ideology. The Education *White Paper* (DfE, 2010, 4.7) was rich with talk of core knowledge as 'the best that our past and present

generations have to pass on to the next'. Such dialogue presented knowledge as a given and indicated the direction political influence was going to have on education. The idea of substantive or core knowledge emerged from the American philosopher of education Hirsch's (1988) book *Cultural Literacy*. As far back as 2008, Nick Gibb, the then shadow minister for schools, was encouraging his peers in Westminster to give their support to Hirsch's ideas (Abrams, 2012). Political intervention in curriculum matters was seen to be a backward step by the sociologists of education (Wheelahan, 2010). It also 'stirred up considerable controversy' (Firth, 2013, p.61) and ignited a long-standing debate between advocates of knowledge-led and skills-led curricula which Counsell (2000, p.54) called a 'distracting dichotomy'. The inherent problem with the use of such 'either or' dichotomies in education is division and unhelpful debate which distracts educators from epistemological concerns about what knowledge is desirable for children to learn and more broadly the purpose of a school education (Ball, 2013a).

While developing his ideas on powerful knowledge, Young (2008, p.29) became increasingly supportive of a subject-based curriculum for 'common schooling', but Beck (2013, p.180) points out 'that in making this argument he is not endorsing the curriculum traditionalism promoted by Michael Gove'. What Michael Gove was promoting was a fact-based curriculum. Young and Muller (2010, p.17) describe such a curriculum as a Future 1 scenario (Table 2) which maintains the 'outmoded canons of the old elite system' and ignores knowledge's 'innate dynamism, fecundity and openness to change' and views knowledge as given and fixed. In a Future 1 scenario, the textbook is somewhat demonised for its role in the *delivery* of this fixed knowledge. With little dialogue or engagement involved in the acquisition of this knowledge, the Future 1 scenario is perceived to be an under-socialised, traditional and fact-based curriculum.

Table 2 Curriculum Scenarios: Three Futures (source: Young and Muller, 2010)

Scenario	Curriculum	Knowledge
<b>Future 1</b>	Traditional, fact-based	Given and fixed
<b>Future 2</b>	Progressive, over-socialised, focused on competences	Socially constructed, disconnected and unbounded knowledge
<b>Future 3</b>	Curriculum of engagement, shifting ideas and arguments	Dynamic, evolving powerful subject knowledge

Opponents set out a number of key questions raised by the Future 1 scenario such as: What knowledge is intrinsically worthwhile? What counts as geography or geographical knowledge? Might the choice of knowledge be subverted for instrumental purposes such as assessment and accountability? And, who selects knowledge when the world is so geographically rich, diverse and dynamic (Morgan, 2002; Firth, 2013; Hopkin, 2001; Taylor, 2004; Morgan and Lambert, 2010)? These questions suggest that a content-based curriculum is problematic, 'simplistic and unsophisticated' (Kelly, 2009, p.63) and raise the issues of 'alienation and relevance' for those young people who are not a part of the dominant cultural system for which it is written (Priestley and Humes, 2010, p.348). It also supports Freire's (1970, p.71) banking concept of education where 'the teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalised, and predictable'. This idea is developed by Priestley and Humes (2010, p.348) who suggest that 'curricula based upon the selection of content tend to encourage the didactic teaching and passive study of fragmented and decontextualised facts'. Furthermore, it drives the disempowerment of teachers and the politicisation of education, as content choice is taken from teachers and centrally controlled by politicians (Beck, 2008).

Young and Muller (2010) reject this traditional, fact-based curriculum. They also reject the process model, the so-called 'progressive' Future 2 scenario. In a Future 2 curriculum, knowledge is understood to be socially constructed and unbounded, to allow educational growth and development of the individual, to prepare and empower young people for life within our modern, hyper-social, democratic society (Bruner, 1960; Stenhouse, 1975; Biesta, 2006). By building on the everyday experiences of individuals to progress learning, mediating young people's learning activities and link new knowledge conceptually to existing knowledge of how the world works in a process which Vygotsky (1986) describes as 'systematicity', curriculum as process can be a powerful educational tool (Piaget, 1967; Bransford *et al.*, 2000). In other words, 'to be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to arrive with a different view' (Peters, 1966, p.100). This can be achieved with a focus on the principles of enquiry, dialogic and experiential learning processes (Priestley and Humes, 2010).

Structured with knowledge central to enquiry, the process model of curriculum can enrich education. However, this is demanding on teachers, difficult to implement and causes tensions between developmental learning and assessment outcomes (Stenhouse, 1975). Following a constructivist epistemology and drawing on theories of cognitive development of children by Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner, Roberts (2013) has advanced such an enquiry approach to geography. Her work involves a cycle of questioning, collecting data, making sense of data and thoughtful reflection; all supported with theory and set in the real-world. *Geography Through Enquiry* (Roberts, 2013) sets out geography education as a process of development that promotes active learning, criticality and autonomy, rather than the transmission of a preconceived selection of knowledge or a series of goals or objectives to be met. The enquiry approach to geography is fully supported by the Geographical Association, the subject association who published this book and the prequel *Learning Through Enquiry* (Roberts, 2003). Further, it aligns with Bernstein's (2000) notion of the valid transmission of knowledge and the active role of students in acquiring new knowledge.

An extreme version of the progressive curriculum was innovated by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts' Opening Minds programme and a decade ago it was used in approximately 200 schools. Teaching and learning was organised around a series of 'competences' (self-management, team working, problem solving, communication, business awareness, customer care, application of numeracy and ICT) and student experiences, rather than traditional school subjects. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) describe this overly-socialised curriculum as an attack on young people as 'knowers', as they adopt a 'deficit view' of the learner (Lambert, 2011, p.128) and deny the opportunity for students to engage critically with disciplinary knowledge during their school education as the resource ecology of the classroom tends not to include textbooks (Winter, 2011). Where texts are available, the focus is on 'learning activities' and 'things to do' rather than the development of conceptually-structured knowledge (Walford, 1995). Maton (2014a, p.8) argues that teachers busy facilitating skills-led curricula failed to see the creep of this 'knowledge blindness' into their classrooms.

At A level, knowledge had not necessarily given way to a skills agenda, yet the use of predetermined aims and objectives had conflated knowledge as objectives and was sequenced within examination specification topics as chunks of information and lists of facts to learn (Kelly, 2009; Digby, 2013). The objectives approach model, with roots in the work of Tyler (1949), reflects the adoption of the scientific approach to education, where policies are framed in terms of aims and objectives to be achieved and a concern that the curriculum reflects the culture of society (Walford 2001; Rawling, 2001). Objectives outline what knowledge is to be learnt and behaviour to be modified and are the basis for progress and assessment (Puttick, 2015a). According to Kelly (2009), limitations of the objectives model was the unintentional acceptance of the banking concept of education (Freire, 1970), the quantification of cohorts at the expense of the individual and the valourisation of the measurable aspects of education over those which are not. This links to the worrisome practices of indoctrination not education, ‘teaching to the test’ and the consequential lowering of educational standards (Pring, 2013; Taylor, 2013a).

A Future 3 curriculum of engagement arose out of the critique of earlier curricula and aims to engage young people with dynamic, evolving and powerful subject knowledge (Young and Muller, 2010). It also helped educators to think about how knowledge is defined. Underpinned by social realist assumptions, powerful knowledge sidesteps the longstanding epistemological assumption that accepts that knowledge is always a social and historical product, but avoids the extreme position of constructivist relativism associated with postmodernism (Young, 2008). Young *et al.* (2014, p.74) define powerful knowledge as that which ‘is distinct from the common-sense knowledge we acquire through our everyday experience’ and is the means to ensure that all children have access to a canon of objectively ‘better’ subject knowledge for the purpose of social democracy (Hirsch, 1988; Wheelahan, 2010). By positioning powerful knowledge closer to objective, positivist science (to geography as a natural science), Young *et al.* (2014, p.74) infer that it is less commensurable with empiricist, subjective, socially constructed and imagined human geographies (Massey, 2006). This impasse results in the concept not being universally accepted and several critics have raised concerns (Beck, 2013; Roberts, 2014).

For example, an essentialist canon of geographical knowledge is only a theoretical entity and is impossible to define in practice if knowledge is viewed as asocial and ahistorical (Beck, 2013). Social constructivists argue against the possibility of dominant canons, believing instead that knowledge is socially ‘constructed rather than discovered’ (Stake, 1995, p.99) and there are multiple ways of seeing the world (Piaget, 1952). Consequently, social constructivists would not describe geographical knowledge as ‘better’, ‘reliable’, ‘generalisable’ or ‘universal’ - the tenets of powerful knowledge (Young, 2013; Young and Muller, 2010).

Lambert, an advocate of powerful knowledge, worked in collaboration with Young to develop ideas about the structure of powerful knowledge and its value and organisation within the field of geography education (Young, *et al.*, 2014; Beck, 2013). This collaboration brought the debate about the importance of powerful knowledge to the geography education community (Young, *et al.*, 2014; Stoltman *et al.*, 2015). It also refocused research attention on the nature of knowledge and the problems of ‘knowledge-blindness’ (Maton, 2014a, p.8) systemic in schools as a consequence of the over-focus on data and the three t’s; targets, tables and testing (Kelly, 2009). Some in the community raised concerns about the application of powerful knowledge to school geography, for reasons of curriculum development, change and social mobility (Beck, 2013; Catling and Martin, 2011; Roberts, 2014; Slater *et al.*, 2016). Butt (2017) notes that school geography does not currently meet Young’s (2008) characteristics of powerful knowledge and nor does academic geography!

Drawing on the work of Vygotsky, Roberts (2014) argues that schools are responsible for developing both everyday (mundane) and academic (esoteric) knowledge and that everyday knowledge should be valued in schools as much as it is in the parent discipline. Yet Young (2011b, p.152) only sees a place for powerful knowledge in the curriculum, reasoning that ‘school may be the only opportunity that students have to acquire powerful knowledge and be able to move, intellectually at least, beyond their local and particular circumstances’. Drawing on Piaget’s (1967, p.14) constructivist theory of knowledge and his ideas of assimilation and accommodation, knowledge ‘tied to action’ can be assimilated into an individual’s existing conceptual structure. Whereas, attempts to accommodate new knowledge result in learning, cognitive change and the

development of a ‘coherent conceptual network of structures’ (Hyde, 2015, p.291). Experience or everyday knowledge is vital to the process of learning and cognitive change (Catling and Martin, 2011). Roberts (2013, p.111) suggests that geography teachers ‘draw on ways in which academic geography uses everyday knowledge’ and use the learner’s everyday experiences as a starting point for teaching.

The way knowledge is communicated is also important in constructivism. Language is key to being human and as Hyde (2015, p.292) suggests is ‘central to the way in which an individual makes sense of the world’. Hoff (1986, p.28-29) uses this example to make a similar point:

*Sometimes the knowledge of the scholar is a bit hard to understand because it doesn't seem to match up with our own experience of things. In other words, knowledge and experience do not necessarily speak the same language. But isn't the knowledge that comes from experience more valuable than the knowledge that doesn't? It seems fairly obvious to some of us that a lot of scholars need to go outside and sniff around -walk through the grass, talk to the animals.*

Perhaps Young (2016) would do well to walk through the grass, instead of insisting that powerful knowledge can be easily applied to a multi-paradigmatic discipline such as geography, where not all knowledge is structured as it is in the sciences. Equally, knowledge from experience (Hoff, 1986), once valued for being productive and relevant in skills-based geography curricula has now been partially displaced by disciplinary knowledge which is produced, accrued, structured and validated by an epistemic community (Beck, 2013). This idea is further explored in the next section.

#### **2.2.6 *Academic geography, knowledge structures and the two cultures debate***

A level textbook authors require a rich understanding of the nature of knowledge and knowledge structures if they are to effectively recontextualise discipline-based knowledge for transmission in schools. Geography is a multi-paradigmatic discipline and if asked, academics often identify themselves according to their sub-discipline. The contrast in knowledge and language between the two

geographies (human and physical) reflects a much wider gulf between science and the humanities, described by Charles Snow as ‘the two cultures’ in his famous 1959 Rede Lecture at Cambridge University. Snow (1959, p.4) identifies ‘a gulf of mutual incomprehension’ between science as a culture of methods and the ‘literary intellectuals’ of the humanities. His description of two cultures which represented a threat to the survival of western society may have seemed alarmist at the time, but it sparked a two-cultures debate which was to become both ferocious and long-lasting. As Maton (2014a, p.67) points out, in the 1970s the sciences were ‘enjoying a meteoric rise in stature’, while the humanities were portrayed as ‘embattled, insecure and in decline’. In later theorising, Bernstein (1996) distinguishes these two cultures by the different way knowledge is produced, defined and structured.

*The way in which knowledge is classified expresses power because it defines ‘what matters’ and the way in which it is defined.*

(Wheelahan, 2005, p2)

For Bernstein (1996), the process by which knowledge is constructed, maintained and legitimated is worthy of study and highlights who in society has control over education knowledge. Just as knowledge can be defined, so too can the knower. Social scientists are more likely to develop knowledge through socialisation into a world of the humanities (hierarchical knower structure), whereas, someone who practices the scientific method with its specialised language, identity and truth claims will more likely identify as a scientist. Potentially, a scientist can be strongly bounded from other scientists, yet work within a shared common culture (horizontal knower structure).

According to Bernstein (1996, p.172) the organisation of knowledge structures in science are ‘explicit, coherent, systematically principled and hierarchical’, and exhibit ‘a high capacity for cumulative knowledge-building’ (Maton, 2014a, p.86). As a result, the relationship between content or classifications is weak. Whereas the organisation of knowledge in the social sciences comprise ‘a series of segmented, strongly bounded approaches that develop by adding another approach alongside existing ones’ (Maton, 2014a,

p.86), where the relationship between contents or classification is stronger. It is worth noting that any classification of knowledge is somewhat reductionist and there are many more philosophies that underpin knowledge and truth than the two cultures which Bernstein (1996) outlined. Maton (2006, p.46) suggests that rather than scientists and social scientists speaking different languages, it is the ‘underlying structuring principles of their languages’ that are different. Science more likely to be underpinned by objectivist knowledge claims with limited dialogue across disciplinary boundaries (Hall, 1990).

Underpinned by numerous paradigms, geography straddles the two-culture divide and is ‘a contested and pluralist tradition...because geography has meant different things to different people in different settings’ (Livingstone, 1992, p.347). The methods, the conversations and the focus of study for geographers have varied significantly with time and place. New developments within these academic sub-disciplines or geographies are often influenced by developments taking place in society, beyond the discipline. For example, navigation and cartography allowed the development of geography in the Age of Exploration. It was the Enlighteners who popularised the scientific revolution and asserted that true knowledge viewed from a positivist standpoint ‘can only rest on the solid ground of fact and scientific method’ (Seidman, 2008, p.5). This stance is refuted by humanistic geographers such as Tuan (1974), who, in response to the dehumanising effect of positivism (Bruner, 1986), brought philosophy into geography and began to research topics such as place and identity by better understanding human experience, awareness and agency (Gregory *et al.*, 2009).

Drawing on Bernstein’s (2000) idea of horizontal and hierarchical knowledge structures, Maton’s Legitimation Code Theory (2011, 2014a) helps us to understand the level of abstraction and complexity of meaning packed into text. Semantic gravity defines the level of abstraction or ‘degree to which meaning relates to its context’ (Maton, 2014a, p.129) and semantic density is the level of complexity or ‘the degree of condensation of meaning within socio-cultural practices (symbols, terms, concepts, phrases, expressions... etc.)’ (Maton, 2014a, p.129). These two factors may be stronger or weaker. Socio-cultural practices with weak semantic gravity and high semantic density tend to be more abstract and less concrete. Socio-cultural practices with strong semantic gravity and low

semantic density are less abstract and more concrete. As Blackie (2014, p.466) explains, 'lowering of the semantic density does not take it all the way down to 'everyday language' but it is considerably more accessible'. By lowering the semantic gravity as Blackie (2014) suggests, authors and teachers are able to make abstract concepts more accessible for their students. When writing for a particular audience, such as A level students, it is important to understand the level of abstraction and complexity of meanings packed into text. Authors can vary the readability of text in a number of ways, such as changing the language and punctuation. These choices are important because they can change a textbook from being cerebral and inaccessible to readable and inclusive of the target audience.

### **2.2.7 *Defining place and space***

Section 1.7 set out a brief history of university geography or rather geographies. Here, I discuss the geographical concepts of place and space. Although there are a number of concepts which I could have used as a focal point for my research, as place is the most central of concerns for any geographer, it was the ideal choice. It is, however, impossible to discuss place without also referring to the closely related concept of space, therefore both concepts will be discussed in this section along with the differences between the two geographical concepts.

Space and place mean different things to different people and have been written about in numerous ways in the literature. For example, Cresswell (2014, p.6) suggests that place is so ubiquitous, yet 'no one quite knows what they are talking about when they are talking about place' and Hayden (1997, cited in Anderson, 2015, p.51) remarks that place 'is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled that one can never shut the lid'. These assertions have also been made about space (Tuan, 1977). Consequently, the definition of place and space presented here are not exhaustive, but rather focus on how the concepts are best represented to A level students in geography textbooks.

Cresswell (2014, p.15) suggests that 'space is a more abstract concept than place', yet both require each other to be fully understood. Space and place are 'basic components of the lived world; we take them for granted' (Tuan, 1977, p.3). If we move beyond this taken-for-granted notion, we can see that many

meanings are condensed into both concepts. An absolute understanding of space is 'as a system of organisation, defined through Euclidean geometry (with  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $z$  dimensions), as a container in which objects are located and human behaviour is played out' (Rawlings Smith, 2016, p.6). This empirical space is where the everyday fabric of daily life is constructed and contrasts with the humanist Henri Lefebvre's (1991) relative view of space not as a container, but as a social space produced through spatial practices, conceived and represented in a range of forms (representations of space and representational space). Space can additionally be understood as the connections and flows of people, goods, capital and ideas which occur at a range of scales from the local to global. Articulated by Harvey (1989), time-space compression is the particular idea that technological innovations have reduced temporal distances by increasing the speed of communication across space. Consequentially, distant places have been getting closer in the geographical imagination, allowing greater interconnections between people and places across space as new markets open up.

Unlike space, place is a way of understanding. It is a meaningful space (Cresswell, 2014). According to Catling and Willy, 2009, p.12), places are:

*...physical entities...[t]hey have physical and human characteristics we can represent in words, pictures and maps. We develop images of places from our direct and indirect encounters of them. From personal experience, we develop our perceptions of and feelings and viewpoints about places. In this way, we develop a sense of place, how we connect and identify with (or disconnect from) places familiar to us, such as home and our favourite places (or places avoided). Places are real and they exist in our images of them, arising from our experience. Different people hold very different ideas and have very different feelings about the same places.*

This quote highlights the subjective nature of place which human geographers try to understand to make sense of the world and how we experience it (Cresswell, 2014). In order to develop conceptual understanding, Agnew (1987) created a tripartite definition of place constructed from *location*, *locale* and *sense of place*. *Location* describes where on the Earth places are within a spatial framework,

*locale* is the landscape or context for everyday actions and interactions and *sense of place* signifying our feelings about particular meaningful locations. As suggested by Anderson (2015), the unique character or feel of locale can be identified from the material artefacts (physical traces) and non-material practices (languages, beliefs and cultures) associated with a particular place. By recognising the three fundamental aspects of place, Agnew (1987) imbues the concept with a richer meaning and repositioned it as a unifying force within Geography (Castree, 2011).

Tuan (1977) argues that space is devoid of meaning and is associated with movement and freedom. Whereas, Lefebvre (1991) sees space as a physical and social landscape which is saturated with meaning from processes operating over a range of scales and place-bound social practices. The most useful comparison between space and place is from Cresswell (2014, p.15) who suggests that ‘places have spaces between them’. To exemplify this, think about a commuter who travels by train. They may define the countryside they pass by as space, yet, for the local farmer it could be the place where multiple generations of the same family have worked the land and call home. Place is therefore a humanised version of space, which Anderson (2015) describes as being drenched in cultural meaning.

### **2.2.8 *Place in academic geography***

Section 2.2.7 introduced the geographical concepts of place and space. This section looks at the changing ways geographers have thought about place in relation to the overarching geographical paradigms which have been used to underpin and organise knowledge over the last half a century. The numerous sub-disciplinary fields which together can be identified as geography each have affiliations with certain paradigms, epistemological and ontological beliefs, methods and ways of thinking. To make the case for place and space more complex, they are both concepts which are studied by academics, working between or beyond the multi-paradigmatic discipline of geography, who think differently about them. For the purpose of my research, the scope of this discussion will not reach beyond the discipline of geography. Several key texts (Livingstone, 1992; Bonnet, 2008; Johnston and Sidaway, 2004; Castree, 2005) chronicle shifts in the history of geographical thought and the changing nature of the geographies being constructed in university, while others (Rawling, 2001;

Walford, 2001; Winter, 2009, 2011, 2013) detail the changing nature of school geography. Each of these publications in their own way tell geography's story and recognise that the approach to learning about place and space are influenced by the prevalent paradigms and concerns of geographical study (Rawlings Smith *et al.*, 2016). They also highlight how the history and nature of the multi-paradigmatic discipline is complex, contested, 'open to debate' (Livingstone, 1992, p.4) and not 'definitive' (Walford, 2001, preface).

The changing nature of academic geography was mirrored in the school classroom, where spatial patterns and models (such as central place theory and diffusion models) came to replace the study of geographical processes and would underpin the subject for a decade or more. Chorley and Haggett's (1967) seminal textbook *Models in Geography* was 'a product of a genuine revolution in thinking' (Walford, 2001, p.163) and quickly advanced this 'new geography' into the classroom. Increasing dissatisfaction with geography's quantitative lurch meant that academic geographers began to shift their focus away from space, maps and numbers. According to the Marxist geographer Harvey (1973), the quantitative approach was problematic because it told geographers less and less that was relevant and it had lost sight of the central concern of geography, that of people and places.

In critical response to geography's 'spatial turn' (Thrift, 1996), a number of competing paradigms including phenomenology, behaviourism and humanism emerged during the late 1970s through key texts such as Harvey's *Social justice and the City* (1973), and Smith's *Human Geography: A welfare approach* (1977). These radical geographies with a concern for social inequalities, justice, welfare and racism set about putting the human back into the subject (Harvey, 1973). New cultural geographies with an anti-Marxist character such as post-structuralism and post-colonialism emerged in the early-1980s alongside feminist geography (Livingstone, 1992). Alternatively described as the 'cultural turn' (Cloke *et al.*, 2005), this more fragmented approach to the subject (Rawding, 2013b) mirrored change happening in the world outside the academy (Livingstone, 1992) and saw a shift away from a positivist epistemology toward interpretative meaning-making, representation and criticality. It is important to remember that teachers and authors close to retirement age were undergraduate students during these

changing times, therefore their academic experiences can be quite different according to where they were educated.

As a consequence of the cultural turn in geography, place really did begin to matter again. This was at a time when geographers were vocalising the need for a unified approach to the fragmenting discipline, but not necessarily taking any action (Herbert and Matthews, 2004). The work by Agnew (1987) to define place was intrinsically important. It also helped to define geography's identity at a time of societal change. Massey's (1994, p.1) understanding that geography's key concepts including space and place are 'incredibly mobile' fits with some of the key characteristics of the contemporary world in which increasingly complex flows and movements result from rapid time-space compression (Harvey, 1989). According to Harvey (1996, p.310), places are deeply ambiguous facets of life and are the 'contested terrain of competing definitions', therefore, we should further muddy the waters and explore other definitions. Sack (2004) argues that place is constructed by human culture, that humans constantly make and remake place and Anderson (2015) reminds us that human as well as non-human actors influence this construction. Cresswell (2014) notes that place is constructed as materialities, meanings and practices gather together, with some forces stabilising and others destabilising the coherent identity of a place. Arguing that place is also constructed in the imagination, Harvey (1973) suggests that the process of storytelling represents place vicariously rather than through direct experience in the world. He theorises the 'geographical imagination' to better understand power dynamics, connections and identities rooted in places. Lynch (1960) describes these places which we can picture mentally as 'imageable'. The idea that we are emotionally and experientially tied to particular places means that there are plural constructions of place, some of which are shared and others negotiated, contested and redefined. What is special and unique about place and makes 'here' very different to 'there' (Heidegger, 1993), according to Massey (2005, p.140) is 'precisely that thrown-togetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now (itself drawing on a history and geography of then and theres)'.

Other academics think about place in different ways. Young people often follow the same routes to school, to the shops or to friends' houses. This choreography of doing things in place can help root children and young people

socially and geographically (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Anderson, 2015). Rootedness (Tuan, 1974) ties individuals, social groups or whole nations and their culture to particular environments. In *City: A Guidebook to the Urban Age*, Smith (2012) suggests that we only understand urban environments by exploring them at a slower pace, on foot, one street at a time. This allows us to read the palimpsest of historical and social traces, to deeply experience the peripatetic sense of place (sights, sounds and smells) and the uniqueness or genius loci of place (Adams *et al.*, 2001). The significance and security we attach to particular local places may be influenced by person-place relationships that develop during pauses in everyday rituals and journeys through space, Tuan (1977, p.6) suggests:

*If we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.*

People are also affected by the politics of place. Order can be made out of chaos by the processes of cultural ordering and geographical bordering (Anderson, 2015). Whether we follow the rules of a particular bounded space (Sack, 2004), of ‘places as territories’ (Herbert and Matthews, 2004, p.9), or not, can lead to feelings of belonging or a sense of alienation and exclusion. Relph (1976) argues that your identity as an *insider* or *outsider* can affect how you experience place. If place is constructed in this way, with the use of order and bounding, then place can occur at any scale from a favourite chair to a continent (Tuan, 1977). This notion jars with the progressive use of scale from the local to the global in school geography curriculum, where primary school pupils tend to focus on their own locality, with later key stages increasingly studying regional, national and global scales (DfE, 2013).

Drawing on the work of Tuan (1977), Massey’s (2005) *For Space* is a bold attempt to make the case for the re-imagining of space and place, challenging the static view of place as a singular, bounded and fixed product. Using the analogy of place as an entangled ‘bundle of trajectories’ (2005, p.119), Massey theorises about the progressive or global sense of place, where place can be imagined as ‘always in process’ (Massey, 2005, p.11), where a multitude of materialities,

meanings and practices gather and disperse or become and dissolve on a daily basis (Cresswell, 2014). Massey's global sense of place engages with issues of contemporaneous plurality, globalisation and temporality and accepts that flows and interconnections affect place, making it a complex construct rather than a victim of the annihilation of space by time. Other academics, such as Relph (1976, preface) suggest how rootedness that tied people to place in the 1960s 'has almost everywhere been substituted by a celebration of mobility'. Writing in *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Augé (1995) argues for the loss of place, as unique and distinct places are replaced with generic landscapes of capitalism (Bonnett, 2015) and spaces of transience such as multinational hotels, service stations and airports. These few examples of the construction of place in the academy highlights the complexity of the concept and its contested and changing nature. Further, by delocating geographical knowledge from the field of knowledge production and relocating it into schools (Bernstein, 2000), students are disconnected from the knowledge producers and unless school educators retain close links with the academy, the knowledge transmitted in schools may not retain disciplinary structures or their generative principles (Wheelahan, 2006). For me, place is the context in which we live our lives, a meaningful location where materialities, representations and practices gather.

### **2.2.9 Revised A level geography subject content**

The 2014 A level reforms are part of a cyclical process, which occurs approximately every six to eight years and are part of a wider 5-19 school reform process, where teachers were 'presented with a completely new set of content requirements' at both GCSE and A level (Rawling, 2016, p.16). According to the government, the purpose of A level structural reform was to improve standards and 'encourage development of the skills and knowledge students need for progression to undergraduate study' (DfE, 2014a, p.5). This was to be achieved by replacing modular with linear qualifications, having terminal examinations as well as updating subject content.

In order to make an informed decision about what should be taught at A level, the government formed an A-level Content Advisory Board (ALCAB) for subject advice and guidance. Geography's 12 ALCAB members or 'prophets' using Bernstein's (2000) language, were predominantly disciplinary 'elites' (Butt,

2003) from leading universities. ALCAB's formation provided 'a long overdue opportunity' (Rawling, 2015, p.166) for academic input into 16-19 education. It also moved power away from the DfE, as 'Ministers were content to stand back from the process they had initiated' (Rawling, 2015, p.166). This was unlike the National Curriculum reforms affecting students up to the age of 14. ALCAB, chaired by Professor Martin Evans, identified new A level subject content in the form of contextual (empirical), conceptual (organised) and procedural (skills) knowledge to bridge the gap between school and undergraduate geography (Evans, 2014). This was then translated by Rawling (2016), Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Oxford and DfE geography consultant, to ensure it was fit for purpose and suited the needs of the government and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). Core subject content makes up 60 per cent of each of the four English A level geography examination specifications (DfE, 2014a, p.3). Subject content for the A level topic of Changing Places, outlined by ALCAB, was developed and fleshed out by the assessment organisations (AQA, 2016; Eduqas, 2016; Edexcel, 2016; OCR, 2016), with a substantial amount of rigid, well-defined knowledge. The optional content was solely decided at each assessment organisation by Subject Advisors, Chief Examiners and Principal Examiners according to what they thought students should learn and what was popular with students i.e. tectonics (DfE, 2014a).

Reform saw changes to A level Geography assessment objectives as set out by Ofqual. The proportion of marks available for knowledge and understanding decreased in the new specifications (30-40 per cent), whereas the proportion of marks available for the application of knowledge and understanding increased to around 40 per cent (DfE, 2014a). This move was to be made to add 'rigour' (Gove, 2014) and would require A level students to be able to do more than transmit knowledge, for example they must analyse, assess, critically evaluate and judge, as well as demonstrate competence in a range of geographical, fieldwork and statistical skills.

To make sense of the new A level subject content, students need to be able to categorise information and relate ideas together. Roberts (2013, p.81) argues that 'in order to understand geography, rather than simply accumulate factual knowledge, students need to acquire a wide range of concepts which geographers

use to help them think about the world and communicate their ideas'. Concepts are hierarchies of rules, classifiers that underlie everything we do in our discipline and can frame geography (Husserl, 1927; Taylor, 2008). There is moderate agreement on geography's unifying or 'organising' concepts (Castree, 2005), although individual concepts are 'sites of contestation' due to their multiple meanings' (Lambert and Morgan, 2010, p.xi). The concepts of space and place, scale and connection, proximity and distance are all geographical in character and are able to reach beyond the specificities and particularistic meanings of different sub-disciplines (Jackson, 2006). Conceptual understanding allows the learner to interpret and make sense of knowledge, make links within the subject, develop explanations and think abstractly (Bonnett, 2008; Brooks, 2013; Roberts, 2013). Concepts can, as we have seen, be developed in disciplines through education but also acquired from everyday experiences, or both. Vygotsky (1986) uses the term 'scientific' or 'theoretical' to describe more abstract concepts developed in the academy. The focus of study on everyday concepts derived from the study of people's experience of being in the world can conflate everyday concepts with theoretical ones. Consequently, this makes concepts such as place, home and locality difficult to use as organising concepts, due to the multiple ways in which they are understood.

The revised A level geography subject content (DfE, 2014a) saw the replacement of population dynamics with place as the substantive core topic for human geography (Evans, 2014). This move was confirmation of the perceived importance of cultural geography in the parent discipline, and now in the school subject. The same process happened with the addition of geographical topics including oceans; carbon cycling and global governance (DfE, 2014a) to bring a more contemporary feel to a somewhat outdated school geography (Knight, 2007; Morgan, 2011; Rawding, 2013a). Furthermore, it saw a shift towards a concept-led approach, encouraging students to develop a more nuanced understanding of place, space, scale and environment (DfE, 2014a).

In legacy textbooks endorsed for the 2008 A level Geography specifications, subject content about place was structured as case studies, examples and as crutches for thematic understanding. The inclusion of place as a unit of study at A level has already progressed how the concept is defined in

school geography. The same may not be said for space which is not mentioned in the A level subject content core unit of Place (DfE, 2014a) and has consequently received much less attention. According to Erickson (2002, p.67), curricula designed with a conceptual rather than a topical focus are a better framework for the organisation of knowledge, as they allow students ‘the ability to understand increasingly complex social, political and economic relationships’. Furthermore, a conceptual focus ‘will help pupils to understand what it means to think geographically’ (Biddulph *et al.*, 2015, p.49), enabling geographical understanding and progression (Brooks, 2013).

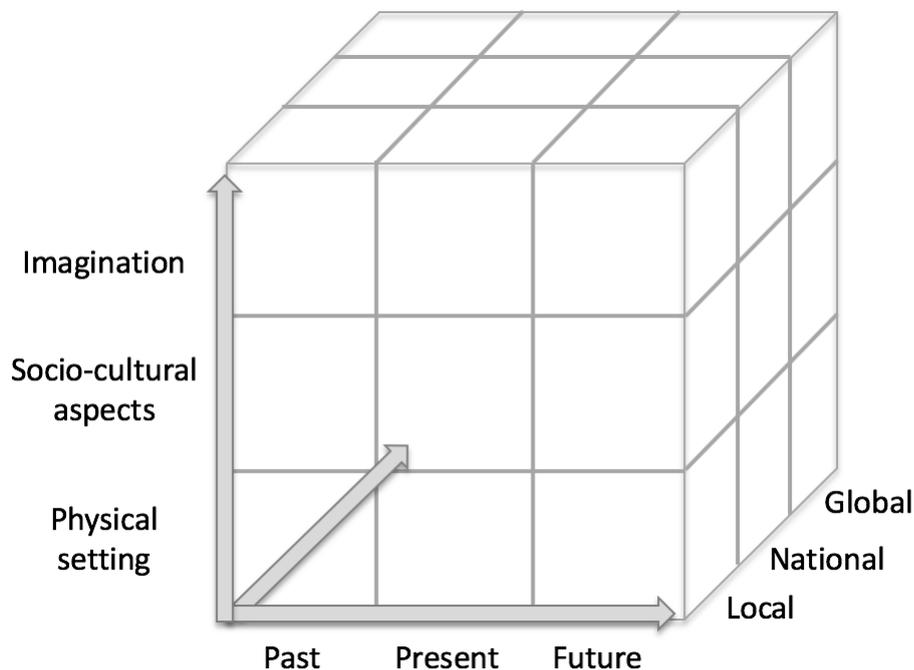


Figure 5 A framework for envisaging place (source: Scoffham, 2013, p.181)

A concept-led approach to the curriculum allows students to explore different dimensions of place (Figure 5), viewed through different scales and timeframes; from the local to the global, from the past to the future and from the concrete physical setting to the abstract imagination (Scoffham, 2013, p.181). By naming the student’s own locality as a focus for study and the requirement for four days of fieldwork (DfE, 2014a), A level reform provides the opportunity for learning to take place in these different dimensions of place, outside the classroom, in the local area, in familiar real-world places. The steer by academics towards more subjective ethno-knowledges seems to contradict the positivist approach to knowledge and assessment so prevalent in examination classes and

endorsed school textbooks. Subjective knowledge although somewhat ‘problematic and seen as subject to the interpretation of individuals’ (Esland, 1971, p.77), is considered by some academics as a valuable form of knowledge as it is derived from direct experience. This assertion is supported by Catling and Martin (2011) who argue that children's ethno-knowledges provide powerful learning bases of equivalent authority to subjects and by Roberts (2014, p.10) who, drawing on the theories of Dewey (1916) and Vygotsky (1986), suggests that students make connections between what they already know and new information and also between different pieces of new information.

The final aspect of the revised A level geography subject content worth a brief discussion is the requirement set out for students to ‘gain an understanding of a number of specialised concepts’ (DfE, 2014a, p.3). Theoretically, the specialised concepts listed in Table 3 which include identity, risk and representation should, due to their ability to frame knowledge, be flagged in curriculum plans and provide curriculum coherence. This is true of both unifying subject concepts and specialised geographical concepts and both should provide powerful framing for geographical knowledge and be integral to the design of educational resources such as textbooks.

Table 3 A level subject content specialised geography concepts (DfE, 2014a)

adaptation	causality	equilibrium	feedback
globalisation	inequality	identity	interdependence
mitigation	representation	resilience	risk
sustainability	systems	thresholds	

### ***2.2.10 Place in school geography***

While the last section focused on the changing nature and contested meanings of place by academic geographers, this section is concerned with the concept of place in the context of school geography. Academic geographers and school geography teachers share a common concern for place. Yet this key disciplinary concept has been noticeably absent from underpinning A level geography. Major (2010, p.90) suggests that ‘school geography is full of opportunities to study places...but there remains little scope for sustained reflection on what place is as a concept’. This situation is partially a result of the culture of positivism that has maintained its

grip on geography since it had gained greater status as a spatial science (Goodson, 1983). It was also an upshot of the thematic approach used to organise A level specifications, where in-depth case studies were used to exemplify themes and which ultimately reduce world coverage. The thematic approach to the curriculum is currently ubiquitous, yet risky, as the spatial context for case studies is easily lost, and misrepresentation, stereotyping and distortion of the world can easily occur (Taylor, 2013b; Roberts, 2006). The inclusion of place as the new substantive topic for geography in the recent A level reforms (DfE, 2014a) is therefore very welcome and much overdue. Academic and school geographies have very different histories and yet there is an expectation that some form of continuity bridges the two. Different approaches to the discipline are evident in A level subject content, one representation, created by a geography educator is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Approaches to studying place (Rawling, 2011, p.68)

Approaches to studying place	Representation in A level
<p><b>Phenomenology:</b> Drawing on Heidegger’s philosophy of being in-place, focusing on how place is an essential part of being human. Phenomenological geographers include Tuan, Relph, Sack, Casey and Malpas.</p>	<p>Strong presence in early A level syllabuses. A hint of it in the new subject content, where the unique character of place is to be described (AQA, 2016).</p>
<p><b>Social Constructionism:</b> Informed by Marxism, geographers are interested in individual places, as they reflect more general underlying processes that form them e.g. critical, post-colonial and feminist geographers e.g. Harvey and Massey.</p>	<p>New subject content promotes social and economic processes i.e. mobility, globalisation and power relation of those who shape or rebrand place and highlights conflicting views.</p>
<p><b>Regional:</b> Places are discrete areas of land with their own characteristics and ways of life. Geographers identify and describe the particularity of place and draw regional characteristics, without systematic articulation e.g. Vidal de la Blanche and Patrick Geddes.</p>	<p>A level subject content gives weight to investigations in the local area, sense of place, place attachment and lived experience of place.</p>

Back in 1996, Graves notes how rapid developments in the academy were occurring in stark contrast to the stable subject content of Ordinary ('O') and Advanced ('A') level geography in the two decades that followed their inception in 1951. Only with the introduction of the Schools Council Geography 16-19 Project in 1980 was an innovative approach to Post 16 geography embraced. The Project involved a radical reappraisal of the aims, practice and assessment of the subject, encouraging an enquiry-based approach to teaching and learning with active participatory pedagogy. The less academic and more educational 16-19 A-level syllabus supported wider participation and was both influential and popular with candidate numbers rising from 1,680 in 1987 to over 12,000 in 1994 (SEAC, 1993, cited in Rawling, 2001, p.121). Curriculum development in 2000 saw the Geography 16-19 syllabus revised as the Edexcel B specification, this retained the enquiry approach and modular design of the Project, but also saw additional content such as key skills added. The unintended consequence was a change of role for A level teachers 'from being the curriculum designer... to becoming the deliverer and administrator of tightly prescribed modular packages' (Rawling, 2001, p.122). It was not until the government invited academics to have a greater say in A level subject content that specifications would substantially change.

Teachers work in a pressurised environment (Ferretti, 2013; Mitchell, 2013) and at times of curricula change, they focus on revising specification content, over and above any other consideration. Subject content as learnt by students is therefore not determined directly by developments in the academy, but instead mediated by a teacher's own knowledge and that derived from their peers, textbooks, assessment organisations and a whole range of other sources. Table 5 represents connections between the parent discipline and new A level Geography subject content (DfE, 2014a), which teachers may or may not be aware of when they prepare their teaching resources. It indicates that geography's big ideas are the focus of study, avoiding the constraints of singular approaches such as phenomenology or regional geography (as presented in Table 4).

Table 5 Connections between A level and disciplinary geographical knowledge

A level subject content	Connection to disciplinary knowledge
Relationships and connections	
How demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of places are shaped by shifting flows of people, resources, investment, and ideas at all scales from local to global.	Globalisation and time/space compression (Harvey, 1973, 1996), changing places (Massey, 1994, 2005), places remade (Sack, 2004), a site of gathering (Casey, 2001) and at all scales (Tuan, 1977).
How past and present connections, within and beyond localities, shape places and embed them in the regional, national and global scales.	Progressive sense of place as ‘bundle of trajectories’, in process (Massey, 2005), distinctiveness of regions, rejection of determinism (Vidal de la Blanche, 1908).
Characteristics/ impacts of external forces operating at different scales including (i) government policies, (ii) the decisions of multinational corporations, or (iii) the impacts of international or global institutions.	Globalisation, mobility and placelessness (Augé, 1995; Relph, 1976), place as a unique assemblage of parts that interact together at a range of scales to make a whole (DeLanda, 2006).
Meaning and representations	
How humans perceive, engage with and form attachments to places and how they present and represent the world to others, including the way in which everyday place meanings are bound up with different identities, perspectives and experiences.	Place as a way of ‘being in the world’ (Heidegger, 1993), place is significant to human ‘being’ (Relph, 1976), topophilia is a bond between people and place, developed through experience, it is subjective (Tuan, 1974), places of deep distrust (Rose, 1993).
How external agencies, including governments, corporate bodies and community groups make attempts to influence or create specific place-meanings and thereby shape the actions and behaviours of individuals, groups, businesses and institutions.	Sense of place, imbued with meaning (Tuan, 1977), power of place, place determines our experience (Relph, 1976), genius loci, in place/out of place (Cresswell, 1996), place is structured by society (Malpas, 1999).
That places may be represented in a variety of different forms and use different media that often give contrasting images to that presented more formally or statistically.	Meanings and materiality are not natural, but a social construct (Cresswell, 2014; Harvey, 1996). The social, natural and cultural come together in place (Sack, 1992).
That both past and present processes of development can be seen to influence the social and economic characteristics of places and so be implicit in present meanings.	Concern for social equality (Smith, 1977), place is constructed as materialities, meanings and practices gather (Cresswell, 2014), place of consumption (Sack, 1992), place memory (Casey, 1987).

Many of the geographers listed in Table 5 are not specifically named in formal subject content (DfE, 2014a). However, their influence is clearly visible. It is the responsibility of authors working in the recontextualisation field, as it would be for teachers working in the field of reconstruction, to decide how to select and represent place, whose academic work to discuss, and where on the complexity-accessibility continuum to pitch lessons.

### ***2.2.11 Conceptions of place***

Place is a complex and constantly changing reality and so too are our conceptualisations of it. Challenges to existing paradigms and shifts in thinking influence how academics perceive and research new knowledge. The concept of place, the focus of this research, lies at the heart of geography and is perceived by teachers, authors and the geography education community in a multitude of ways. Each place we study is unique, dynamic and context specific. At A level, authors cannot write about the whole world in a textbook. There is not sufficient space, so they are selective (Waugh, 2000). A great deal of geographical knowledge presented to students is therefore partial, positioned and plural, seen from a particular standpoint (Massey, 2006), ‘from here, rather from there’ (Allen and Massey, 1995, p.1). This standpoint, the way we see the world, was described by Walford (1996) as a geographical perspective. It is informed by our experience learning about the world and our experience of being in the world.

In a study of the geographical perspectives of postgraduate teacher trainees, Catling (2004, p.151) suggests that the senses of geography held by secondary teachers ‘may be related to or aligned with particular geographical *schools of thought*’. Drawing on and supported by research by Walford (1996), Barratt Hacking (1996) and Martin (2000), Catling (2004) finds that a majority of students view geography from the perspective of Globalists, Earthists and Interactionists (Table 6). Globalists focus on the features of the Earth, Earthists are concerned about earth surface processes and features and Interactionists have a concern for the physical-human dimension of the environment.

Table 6 Geographical perspectives (adapted from Catling, 2004, p.153)

<b>Geographical perspective</b>	<b>Place as the study ...</b>
Globalist	...that develops an informed knowledge and understanding of the world, its <b>human</b> and <b>physical features</b> and environments, and of the countries of the world.
Earthists	...of the Earth, its physical and human features and environments and of the <b>forces</b> and <b>processes</b> that shape them.
Interactionists	...of the interactions between and the interdependence of people and their nature and social environments, of the processes that sustain these <b>interrelationships</b> , 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.
Spaceists	...that develops an informed knowledge and understanding of the world, through the <b>spatial patterns</b> , connections and differences between physical and human features.

The geographical perspectives of textbook authors are influenced by their choice of reading material, prior educational experiences and of course their lived experiences (Brooks, 2006). Geography teachers close to retirement age were taught within the paradigm of regional geography at secondary school. The regional approach to geography dominated the discipline from the 1920s, but its hold on school geography did not fully dissipate until the early 1980s. With a lack of theory to explain segmented and regional variations, a new generation of academics influenced by the quantitative revolution reconceptualised geography as a spatial science from the 1970s. Within this positivist paradigm the concept of place was 'reduced to numerical data or points in space, detached from identity or meaning' (Rawlings Smith *et al.*, 2016, p.6). Some school teachers, particularly those who completed degrees focusing on big data, spatial patterns and mapping continue to frame their teaching of school geography within the paradigm of spatial science.

With only nine participants in this research there is not enough data to categorise textbook authors according to their geographical perspective. However, it is possible to analyse the data through a geographical perspectives' lens (Walford, 1996; Barratt Hacking, 1996; Martin, 2000). Catling (2004, p.157)

notes that the motivation for research on teachers' geographical perspectives is to engage prospective teachers in 'understanding their own view of geography so that they might teach the subject more effectively'. The motivation for this research is to understand the geographical schools of thought which inform how authors see and write about the world and help them to recontextualise subject knowledge. Furthermore, for multi-paradigmatic subjects such as geography, it would be expected that textbook authors avoid the discursive process of canonisation (Bakhtin, 1981) where voices and ideas from different traditions are reduced to a single consensual view and instead select and integrate multiple views and ideas. For my research, to maintain anonymity there is no intention to connect the geographical persuasions of authors with the texts that they write.

## **2.3 Textbooks**

After discussing curriculum and knowledge in the previous section, this section moves on to focus on textbooks and the work of textbook authors in the recontextualisation field. This section starts by discussing the dual purpose of a textbook as commercial product and educational resource, then moves on to explore the place and power of endorsed textbooks in the school geography classroom. It ends by considering the role of textbook authors as recontextualising agents who recontextualise knowledge in a suitable form ready for reproduction in schools and colleges by A level teachers and students.

### **2.3.1 *A level textbooks – a commercial product and educational resource***

According to the UK Annual Book and Consumer survey, in 2017 over 360m books were sold and total publishing income hit £5.7bn, a five per cent year on year increase (Publishing Association, 2018). This growth has also been seen in the education sector. The UK publishing industry is the fifth largest in the world behind the US, China, Germany and Japan (International Publishers Association, 2017). Members of the UK Publishing Association include Pearson, Penguin Random House, Hachette and the University presses. Stephen Loting, the Chief Executive of the Publishing Association, named UK Publishing a world leader and has suggested that 'all of us have at some point in our lives enjoyed the work of a great author, used a high-quality textbook, or benefited from the sharing of

academic literature' (International Publishers Association, 2017, p.1). This access can enhance literacy levels, empower young people and improve life chances.

The UK publishing industry is highly productive, yet there are a number of challenges affecting the sector including fierce competition, the digital transition and open-access content. In 2017, digital sales rose by eight per cent to £1.7bn and physical sales, boosted by international orders, reached £3.4bn (Publishing Association, 2018), while domestic sales flat-lined. The problem with digital books for a publisher is that each unit is often sold at a lower price than the physical format and profit-margins are narrower. So, unless a title sells well, publishers are unlikely to make huge profits. Furthermore, it is much easier to export digital books from one country to another and this can impact on the publishing industries of any nation. After posting profit warnings, the publishing company Pearson has shifted to a primarily digital business model by announcing that physical education books would no longer be published in the United States (2019). An outcry from American educators has provided a temporary reprieve, however low sales may seal the deal at some point in the future.

The customer base of a school textbook is far smaller than for fictional books. In the case of A level Geography, the total number of students sitting an examination in 2019 was 34,960 (JCQ, 2019b). The most popular A level Geography assessment organisation is AQA and they endorse three textbooks, therefore each of the publishers (Hodder Education, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press) are in direct competition with two others. OCR, an assessment organisation chosen by fewer students, made the decision to only endorse a textbook published by Hodder. Considering the challenging conditions for publishers (Bond and Hook, 2017), the desire for profitability can significantly influence decisions made by authors, editors, publishers and booksellers such as the textbook structure, design, objectives and approach to knowledge, data and activities (Apple, 2013).

The dual purpose of a textbook as educational resource and commercial product is the cause of many constraints felt by an author. Marsden (2001, p.11) notes that they focus on the trinity of matter (subject content), methods (educational processes) and mission (social purposes). Graves and Murphy (2000) go further and suggest that they are a manifestation of a society's ethos, culture

and technological stage. Attending to this latter point, we can see from the publishing industry data that we are in a time of transition, where the format of books is continuing to shift to digital. In our technological society, school children seek alternative forms of entertainment to books in the form of digital media, games and interactive platforms. The industry expects the same transition to take place in education. Digital textbooks display subject content on an interactive whiteboard, identical content can be accessed at home on online platforms such as Kerboodle (Oxford University Press) or Dynamic Learning (Hodder Education). These platforms, known as blended learning solutions, provide students with digital textbooks known as eTextbooks as well as additional teaching, learning and assessment resources written explicitly in support. In terms of the resource ecology of the classroom, textbooks are one of a number of educational resources that teachers might use during the school day. Technology has increased this range. It has also allowed authors the opportunity to self-publish, upload and share work, while bypassing traditional publishing houses and their gatekeeping behaviour. For example, the Times Education Supplement (TES, 2019) resource site holds over 619 thousand secondary teaching resources and advertises that it has a global reach of eight million teaching professionals (tes.com). Yet the publishing data presented earlier reaffirms the importance of textbooks as a key educational resource.

*While the text dominates curricula at the elementary, secondary and even college levels, very little critical attention has been paid to the ideological, political and economic sources of its production, distribution and reception.*

(Apple, 2013, p.154)

This situation refers to American schools; a similar picture would emerge if we described examination classes in secondary schools and colleges in England. Writing in 2000, Graves and Murphy (2000) note that the textbook remains the key teaching resource in UK schools because it ‘establishes much of the material conditions for teaching and learning and it is the textbook that often defines what is legitimate knowledge to pass on’. Apple (2013, p.153) suggests that school

knowledge is commodified knowledge, lived knowledge and knowledge of the dominant classes. Textbooks also provide the most legitimate source of knowledge, due to the quality assurance and endorsement by assessment organisations (Diskey, 2017). Textbooks are therefore a written artefact which reflect the state of the school subject, prevailing views about knowledge, pedagogical thinking and the education policy in place at the time of writing (Marsden, 2001; Waugh, 2000). Textbooks are the mechanism for the reproduction of class, gender and race relations and can be used as a tool for societal change. Authors have some agency in this process, to legitimise ethical, citizenship, environmental and any other agendas which they choose to advance (Apple, 2004).

### 2.3.2 *The place of A level textbooks in school geography*

In England, geography textbooks are produced for-profit by commercial publishers including Pearson, Hodder Education, Cambridge University Press (CUP) and Oxford University Press (OUP). These publishers are all in the Livres Hebdo Top 40 global publishing groups by revenue (Millet, 2017), their ranking shown in Table 7.

Table 7 The Livres Hebdo Top 40 global publishing groups by revenue for 2016

Rank (2016)	Publishing Group	Parent Company	Parent Country
1	Pearson	Pearson Plc	UK
8	Hodder (Hachette Livre)	Lagardère	France
21	Oxford University Press	Oxford University	UK
37	Cambridge University Press	Cambridge University	UK

At A level, each of the four assessment organisations (AQA, Eduqas, Edexcel and OCR) could potentially endorse a maximum of three textbooks for their geography specification. There are six endorsed A level geography textbooks in press, half endorsed by AQA, two endorsed by Edexcel and one by OCR. According to Lee and Catling (2016a, p.343), textbooks have gained a dominant status in education because ‘they provide expertise and security for teachers’. Textbooks match specification content, contain a wide range of data, pass through

a review process to gain endorsement and can influence what and how geography is taught by teachers (Lidstone, 1992; Biddulph, *et al.*, 2015; Apple, 2014).

Textbooks are a widely used resource in the geography classroom (Westaway and Rawling, 1998; Waugh 2000). When the first very detailed KS3 National Curriculum was introduced in 1991, textbooks provided a key resource, helping overwhelmed teachers to deliver the curriculum (Roberts, 1998). Over the last decade or two, a general anti-textbook ethos has developed in education in England (Lidstone, 1992), perhaps in reaction to these KS3 experiences. As Marsden (2001, p.1) explains ‘the received wisdom remains that textbooks undermine professionalism, typify an undesirable transmission model of teaching and learning, and are generally incompatible with progressive educational practice’. This ethos is evidenced by a more recent TES/YouGov survey which revealed that textbook use in lessons has dropped from 13 per cent in 2014 to ten percent in 2017 (Ward, 2017), supporting Oates’ (2014, p.5) assertion that England has ‘moved imperceptibly but significantly out of sync with these kinds of materials’. Oates (2014, p.11) blames theory-based educationalists who favour the use of worksheets and suggests that the link between textbooks and high-stakes assessment ‘makes their use compelling’. The government have recently called for teachers to use knowledge-rich textbooks more often, citing how the use of high-quality textbooks is one element of high performing jurisdictions such as Singapore and Hong Kong, another is that teachers in these jurisdictions are enthusiastic about their use (Gibb, 2017; Gove, 2014). In the following quote, Diskey (2017, p.12) raises a concern about the politicisation of textbook production:

*The production of high-quality, suitable educational resources is a process that is little understood and routinely undervalued by lawmakers and educational authorities. This is why we have seen a deeply worrying increase in governments interfering in – or even commandeering entirely – the production and delivery of educational resources.*

Although the publishing industry is buoyant in the UK, textbook sales have declined over the last decade. The Publishers Association attribute this decline to

austerity, government underfunding, pressure on school budgets, long-term structural decline and the shift from print to digital (Bond and Hook, 2017). With rising class sizes, cuts in teaching hours per class, cuts in teaching posts and less non-contact time (NUT/ATL, 2017), textbook use should be a solution to the problems of teacher workload, yet their cost is too prohibitive (Oates, 2014). The Publishers Association (2018, p.6) point out that ‘cutting textbook use is schools in a false economy...and help reduce teacher workload’. With low levels of textbook use in English classrooms, Diskey’s (2017) fear that the government might commandeer the production and delivery of resources such as textbooks is quite unfounded.

### ***2.3.3 The role of textbooks in school geography***

Just as the position of knowledge in school geography has shifted, so the position of textbooks as a resource to draw upon in the classroom has waxed and waned. Resistance to textbooks has developed over the last decade, caused by a number of educational advancements, such as technological developments, and wicked problems of cost, temporality and quality. At the turn of the century, technological advances brought big data, information, images, films and information directly into the classroom. At the same time, the interactive whiteboard replaced the chalkboard, empowering teachers with a mechanism for designing and presenting their own resources. With time, PowerPoint presentations became the ubiquitous method of planning, sharing and presentation of lessons in secondary schools, bringing in efficiencies of production or ‘performative improvement’ (Lyotard, 1984, p.45) where geography departments could create and share their own resources. Ofsted and school leadership encouraged such ‘technical efficiency’ (Winter, 2017, p.56) in their reporting mechanism, suggesting it is a characteristic of outstanding teaching if they ‘integrate wide and creative use of technology into their approach’ (Ofsted, 2014, p.14). Consequently, teachers were pressured to make more creative resources, in the hope of better performativity and lesson judgements. Online teacher forums and the Times Educational Supplement website provides a publication platform for resources, but quality control, plagiarism and copyright are difficult issues to address.

Resistance to textbooks increased as financial constraints continued to affect schools. One consequence of the global economic crisis of 2008/9 was the

capping of public spending on education (Winter, 2017). Austerity affected school budgets. Head teachers reduced the amount of non-contact time available to teachers for planning and preparation of resources and a pay freeze (2010 to 2017 in state schools) was blamed for teacher shortages (Staufenberg, 2018). Austerity had a real impact on department budgets, to the extent that class sets of textbooks became unaffordable (Mitchell, 2013). Without access to textbooks, teachers created their own lesson resources and photocopied information sheets, worksheets and even textbooks if the budget allowed (Mitchell, 2013). Budgetary constraints have consequently encouraged the use of freely available or discounted electronic resources which are not always produced to the same standards as endorsed textbooks (Bond and Hook, 2017).

Even if teachers support the use of textbooks, regular curriculum change at A level can mean that their shelf-life is short. Examination specifications change every seven or eight years, but they and the supporting textbooks are revised twice in that time. Askew *et al.*'s (2010) review of textbook use concludes that the frequent and extensive curriculum change in England has led to limited time for developing and trialling textbooks, and this in turn, has led to a reduction in their quality. Consequently, teachers cannot justify the high cost of textbooks when built-in-obsolescence means they do not hold their value. If teachers want supporting evidence for the value of textbooks, it is limited. For example, OECD (2014) found in PISA studies that the link between resource allocation (including textbooks) and high standards is weak, the more important consideration being equitable resource allocation.

According to classroom research by Roberts (1997, p.109), teachers reverted to 'chalk and talk' and cut out group discussions in order to 'get through the syllabus' when the first Geography National Curriculum, which was 'bogged down in content' (Leat, 2001, p.137) was introduced in 1991. Fast-forward to the revised 2014 A levels for first teaching in September 2016 and the same impact on classroom practice is a real possibility of the new 'rigorous', 'challenging' A level specifications (Gove, 2014; DfE, 2014a; Smith, 2014). Rawling (2015, p.168), the geography consultant tasked with constructing subject content for A level Geography following guidance from ALCAB (DfE, 2014a), holds out hope when she writes:

*In order to ensure a lively and dynamic geography curriculum... the need has never been greater to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge and the professional skills of developing the curriculum from national guidelines.*

One way of strengthening teachers' subject knowledge is via well written textbooks. As introduced in Section 2.3.1, there is ongoing debate about the use, purpose and qualities of effective textbooks (Maughan *et al.*, 2015) and the role of textbooks in raising academic standards (Oates, 2014). Textbooks are just one way of translating curriculum requirements (Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991). Luke *et al.* (1989, p.246) are quite right to raise concerns that such textbooks provide the 'authorised version' of knowledge, revered more than alternative versions of knowledge, including that of the teacher. This assertion is supported, if you consider the use of textbook content in mark schemes and examiners' reports written by the assessment organisations who also endorse the textbooks.

Although textbooks can support and influence how teachers should teach it is not possible to fit the in-depth and broad geographical knowledge required at A level into one resource (Catling and Lee, 2017). As Waugh (2000, p.93) quite rightly points out, textbooks 'can never replace the skills, knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise of the classroom teacher'. For Bernstein (1990, p.34) textbooks are unable to replicate the interactional or locational practices of the classroom. Yet, in some situations, for reasons of safety, cost, time and staffing (Chapman and Wurr, 2000; Roberts, 1998), textbooks as the privileged pedagogic texts can become the prime source of information and can worryingly 'become the curriculum on which teachers rely' (Lee and Catling, 2016b, p.50). At the time of writing, the number of students learning geography at GCSE and A level is the highest for 15 years, yet there is an estimated short-fall of trainees (231 in 2018/2019) and geography teachers (1.2 per cent of workforce) (Sibieta, 2018). Where recruitment of specialists is an issue, geography classes must be taught by non-specialists. The Education Policy Institute reported that sixty-five per cent of secondary geography lessons are taught by teachers with a degree in the subject and recruitment is not keeping pace with the number of teachers leaving the profession or the increasing student roll (Sibieta, 2018). Non-specialists are more

likely to rely on a textbook and not be able to fully develop a student's geographical understanding beyond textbook content. Textbooks are therefore an influential resource for the teachers and students who use them.

Knowledge, given legitimacy through textbook endorsement, can be an issue when it perpetuates dated, flawed assertions sourced from previous school textbooks without reference back to authentic, reliable disciplinary information (Knight, 2007). Conflating the role of an examination-focused textbook to such a position is potentially restrictive. In an approval message in the Hodder Education *AQA A-level Geography* textbook, AQA write that they are satisfied with the overall quality but note that the textbook 'cannot provide complete coverage of every aspect of the course' and are not to be used as the definitive source of information (Skinner *et al.*, 2016, pi). Likewise, Ofqual (2012) support the principle by which textbooks are aligned to exams on the basis of 'curriculum coherence' (Schmidt and Prawat, 2006) where all the elements of the curriculum such as content, pedagogy, assessment and resources etc. are 'arranged in an order which is securely based in evidence associated with age-related progression' (Oates, 2010, p.1). However, they do have concerns that endorsed textbooks are 'over focused on exam preparation at the cost of subject content' (Ofqual, 2012, p.3) which can influence classroom practice, increase 'teaching to the test' (Pring, 2013) and consequently narrow the curriculum (Chang and Kidman, 2019).

Over the last couple of decades, an increasing dislike or 'strongly entrenched antipathy' (Marsden, 1998, p.13) to the use of textbooks in school geography has been observed (Lidstone, 1985; Lambert, 1999; Biddulph *et al.*, 2015). Textbook antipathy can be a reaction against central control of the curriculum (Oates, 2014), the quality of educational resources, the built-in obsolescence of subject content and data or a stance used to promote alternatives. Knight (2007) suggests that the subject content of school textbooks bears little relation to developments in the academy. Others, particularly practising teachers, seem to value the quality, reliability and contemporary nature of textbook content, while appreciating that they can provide curriculum support, subject content coverage and save time that would otherwise be required to prepare resources (Waugh, 2000; Westaway and Rawling, 1998; Mitchell, 2016).

#### **2.3.4 *Delivering quality and driving up standards***

A level textbooks are used as a vehicle by which specification content, such as the representation of people and places, can be constructed using a range of resources from photographs, maps, graphs and other data. This function is being subverted by a government that wants to use textbooks as a tool to deliver quality and drive up standards in England, conflating their function in school education (Maughan *et al.*, 2015). According to Oates (2014), chair of the 2010 National Curriculum review, England's poor international performance is a result of the lack of textbook use. He uses evidence that only four per cent of England's science teachers claimed to use textbooks, compared to 68 per cent in Finland and 94 per cent in Singapore (Martin *et al.*, 2011) and this impacts directly on attainment because Singapore was ranked third for science, Finland fifth and the UK was way down in 21<sup>st</sup> place in the 2012 PISA international league tables (Oates, 2014, p.4). Similar evidence was found for mathematics. Yet it is almost impossible to tease out cause and effect in this way. Learning is a complex process, influenced by numerous factors from within and beyond the school gates and textbooks are only part of the picture (Ward, 2017). Oates quite bleakly suggests that there is a 'chronic market failure' (2014, p.6) in terms of having available high-quality textbooks to realise the aims of national curricula, support effective teaching and increase academic attainment. As a result, Nick Gibb, the Schools Minister, proposed that schools reintroduce traditional textbooks and teachers shed their 'anti-textbook ethos' to deliver quality and drive up standards (DfE, 2014a).

The recent resurgence in political goodwill towards textbooks is part of a larger movement away from the progressive educational policies of Labour and England's poor educational performance and a drive towards a knowledge-rich education system. Although the definition of what this looks like is rather obscure. In some ways, the political momentum to drive up educational performance, underpinned by curriculum coherence is shared by A level authors, for they also want to support 'rich, immersive learning leading to higher attainment in examinations' (Oates, 2014, p.17).

#### **2.3.5 *Reconstructing the world in a textbook***

The power of endorsed textbooks at times of curricular change must not be underestimated, for they declare 'legitimate' (Apple, 2004) subject content,

understanding and methods of enquiry which are ‘policed’ by the assessment organisations, publishing houses, editors and in some cases subject associations through the review process and various feedback mechanisms. Despite the increased accessibility of digital media over the last decade and diversification of products in the publications market. For now, school textbooks are the key educational resource used at A level, as evidenced by high textbook sales (Biddulph *et al.*, 2015, p.181). Whether they retain this standing in the information age is unlikely (Widdowson and Lambert, 2006), particularly while the enduring ‘anti-textbook culture’ in education remains (Marsden, 2001).

Textbooks are diverse in style and purpose. Some act as a compendium of resources, while others are designed to support enquiry. Consequently, the approach towards their content design can vary on a continuum from *closed* (high teacher control) to *open-ended* (student-centred or low teacher control), as illustrated in Table 8 (Roberts, 1996; Waugh, 2000; Lee and Catling, 2016a). The different approaches taken with A level geography textbooks are relatively closed and tend to be more structured than for other key stages, using a set design, with less flexibility, enshrining a positivist epistemology within a transmissive pedagogical framework (Winter, 1996; 2007). There is some variation in approach, which tends to reflect the history of the textbook or examination specification and the preferred curriculum model of the editor or publisher. For example, the AQA-endorsed textbook (Skinner *et al.*, 2016), like the specification is quite traditional in style, whereas the Edexcel-endorsed Oxford University Press textbook (Digby *et al.*, 2016) embraces, to a greater degree, an enquiry approach with key questions used to structure content and a greater number of social activities to be carried out in pairs, groups or whole classes.

Table 8 The different types of textbooks (adapted from Waugh, 2000, p.94).

Open-ended		Closed
Limited structure		Structured by examination specification
Less formal		More formal
Use a variety of approaches		Have set design/layout
Non-instrumental-oriented materials		Instrumentally-oriented materials
Review activities to establish readiness to move on		Loaded with assessment identical to the examination
More flexibility for the teacher/student		Less flexibility for the teacher/student
Time consuming to implement		Easier to implement

Examination-focused textbooks can provide expertise and security for teachers and students studying particular topics such as place, as they tend to be underpinned by well-grounded theory and disciplinary knowledge with contemporary case studies and activities to support assessment (Apple, 2014). Although, Oates (2014) argues that the close relationship between endorsed textbooks and examination specifications is a little too close in terms of control over the curriculum enacted in classrooms.

#### 2.4 Professional capital – the three aspects of author expertise

After discussing curriculum and knowledge, and school textbooks, this section moves on to focus on textbook authors and their professional capital. As discussed in Section 2.2.4, authors write in the liminal space between the planned curriculum of policy texts and the curriculum-as-lived in the classroom. This is the context for my discussion about an author’s professional capital and each of its three component parts: decisional, human and social capital. The section concludes by outlining the conceptual framework, with the author as recontextualising agent at the centre, thereby setting the scene for the next chapter on research design.

### 2.4.1 *Professional capital – setting the scene*

Capital is a term used to describe any asset which can be used to turn a profit, underpinned by the capitalist mode of production (Marx, 1867). When applied to education, professional capital (Figure 6) is therefore the investment made into educators, including teachers and textbook writers for better educational outcomes. As such, professional capital is an important factor in competitive and high-performing economies such as Finland (Sahlberg, 2011) where investing in high quality educators reaps the rewards of a highly educated and productive workforce. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) set out professional capital as being the product of an educator’s human, social and decisional capital. Human capital refers to an individual’s knowledge, skills and capabilities necessary to complete certain activities such as writing and is commonly described as expertise. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, p.3) describe high quality educators as being ‘highly committed, thoroughly prepared, continuously developed, properly paid, well networked with each other to maximise their own improvement, and able to make effective judgements using all of their capabilities and experience’. Although human capital is an essential aspect of professional capital, there are two other aspects which need to be introduced.

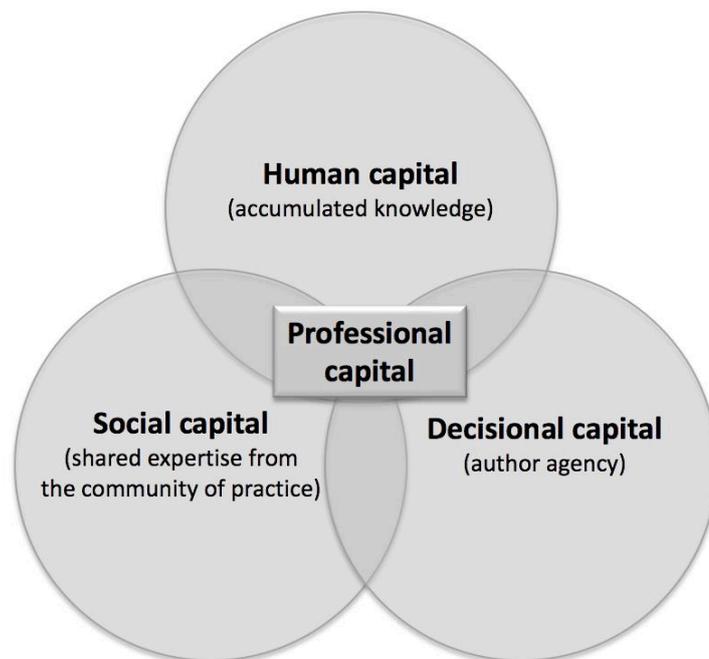


Figure 6 Professional capital: Human, social and decisional capital

Social capital encompasses all sorts of collaborative working. Thinking about the black box of learning, it is intuitive that when educators get together, they are naturally social and share their ideas. For textbook authors, social capital can be shared in a number of professional networks such as those set up for examiners, teachers, geography educators and others who meet purposefully or accidentally to share their knowledge, ideas and opinions to make sense of new knowledge and (re)make a shared understanding of school geography.

The final aspect of professional capital is decisional capital. Decisional capital is the ability to make effective decisions in complex situations. Textbook authors have to deal with a wide range of constraints during the writing process, yet opportunities are also available. Expertise provides authors with an ability to deal with guidelines, recommendations, reviews and changing goalposts and be able to make informed decisions when it comes to what to include in a textbook and what to leave out. The next three sections of this chapter will discuss the different aspects of professional capital.

#### **2.4.2 *Human Capital***

All A level textbook authors are educated to degree level and hold a postgraduate qualification in teaching. In my sample of nine authors used in this study three authors had a master's degree and three hold a doctoral level qualification. In addition to academic credentials, authors build a wealth of professional knowledge, skills and 'know-how' from teaching and learning, writing and assessment. This professional experience developed along with reflective practice broadens the knowledge-base of an author beyond the academic fields of geography and education.

In teaching, this know-how is usefully described by Shulman (1986) as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). PCK blends content knowledge (contextual, conceptual and procedural knowledge), and pedagogical knowledge (what is known about teaching) (Figure 7). According to Shulman (1986), PCK has concerns for planning principles and purposes, subject curricula, topic-specific instructional strategies and students' common misconceptions. PCK or 'know how' develops with experience and reflection of classroom practice and can be understood as a bridge between a teacher's pedagogical and subject knowledge. Calsen (1999, p.134) notes that PCK has 'an epistemologically

ambiguous identity’, although ‘it has still proven to be a useful tool in research and teacher education’. Most research on PCK is focused on teaching and learning rather than writing educational resources (Brooks, 2006; Lane, 2015).

In the context of textbook writing, Lee and Catling (2016a, p.342) use the term textbook pedagogy to describe know-how or content design expertise. Textbook pedagogy can support the production of a high-quality textbook or pedagogic discourse which effectively recontextualises the concepts, knowledge and methods of the subject. It is a complex process as there are so many interlinked, yet important ideas to juggle. Lee and Catling (2016a, p.354) hint at this complexity when they define textbook pedagogy as ‘the skills in selecting, integrating, and applying relevant content knowledge, instructional approaches, pupils’ likely ideas, and teaching repertoires to resource preparation, such as textbook writing’.

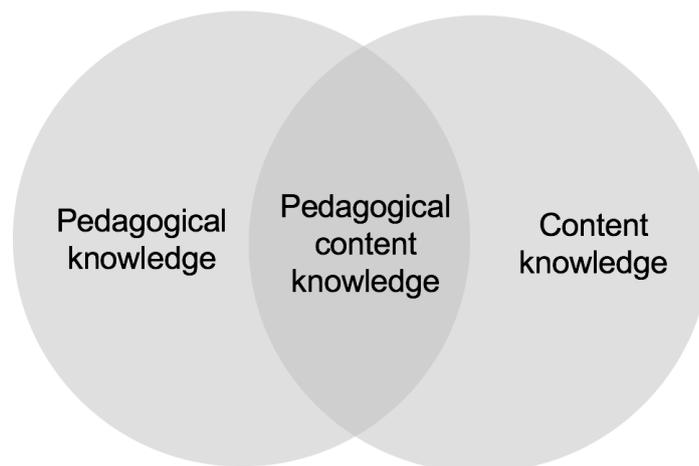


Figure 7 Pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987)

Moving beyond PCK, Winch *et al.* (2015, p.204) identify three interconnected and complementary aspects of teachers’ professional knowledge required to do a good job; those of situated understanding, technical know-how and critical reflection. These can be applied effectively to textbook authors and helpfully embrace the idea of ‘know-how’. Firstly, *situated understanding* or *tacit* knowledge refers to the know-how which teachers manifest in their practice, it can also be understood as *phronesis* meaning ‘practical wisdom’ (Biesta, 2013, p.687), which is used to make ethically sound judgements in the classroom. A teacher’s wisdom might come through classroom experience, via other

practitioners or through educational research (Biesta, 2012). Secondly, technical ‘*know how*’ is the mastery, articulation and sharing of procedural knowledge which enables a teacher to plan and control classroom interventions and predict success. The curriculum planning circle (Rawling, 2007) is one manifestation of this idea which structures planning into six stages (see Figure 8). Finally, *critical reflection* points towards the thoughtful and systematic reflection of practice by a reflective practitioner with a view to improve future practice. The stimulus for this reflection can come directly from classroom practice, from academic research or a combination of the two as it does in PCK (Shulman, 1987).

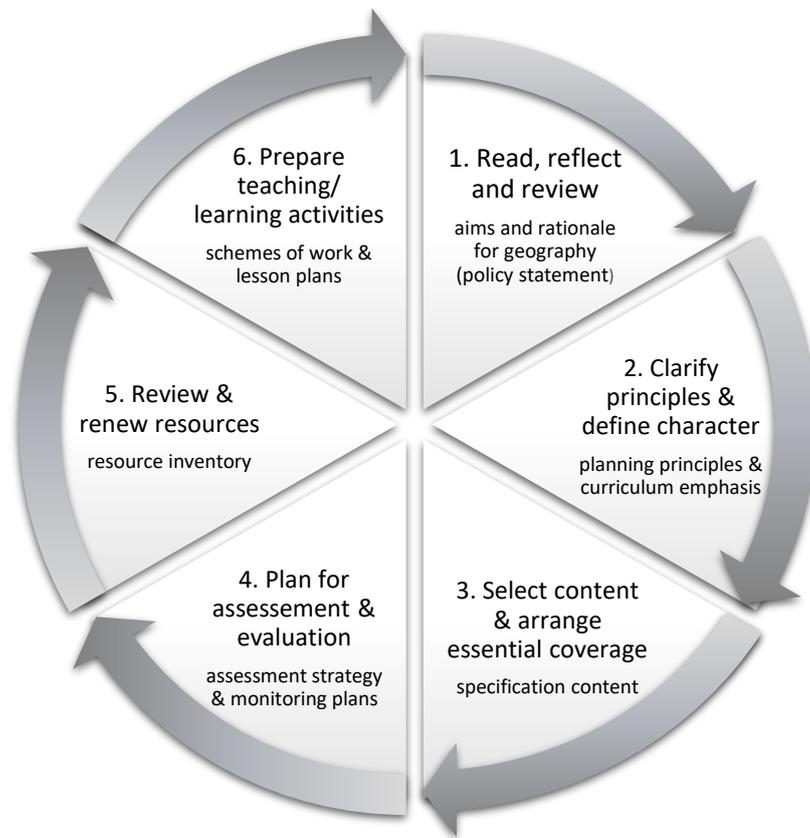


Figure 8 The curriculum planning circle (Rawling, 2007, p.33)

When discussing critical reflection, Butt (2015) notes that initial teacher educators have not had the opportunity to reflect on their practice, as they have limited experience of curriculum planning or teacher practice. He encourages early career teachers to be involved in their own classroom research to help them adopt ‘critical, reflective and evaluative ways of problem solving as well as delivering practical excellence in teaching’ (Butt, 2015, p.5). While this is an ideal, Winch *et al.* (2015, p.208) worry that it is unrealistic, due to teachers’ heavy workload.

When applied to authors, there is an assumption or typification (Campbell, 1991) that all authors are expert, experienced, reflective practitioners with situated understanding and technical know-how. Consequently, early-career authors may feel a great weight of expectation to perform due to stereo-typifications (Campbell, 1991) about their expertise. This can lead to feelings of imposterism (Clance and Imes, 1978) while developing an identity as author, rather than user, of published textbooks.

Following a broadly Heideggerian approach, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) provide a framework of progression for skills acquisition from novice to expertise to understand the process by which experts achieve mastery. Skill in this context is defined as ‘an integrative overarching approach to professional action, which incorporates both routines and the decisions to use them’ (Eraut, 1994, p.125). To reach mastery, Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) suggest that the traits of professional experts, including rational thought, are developed through the accumulation of past experience rather than from theoretical learning, characteristics of each stage are shown in Table 9.

Table 9 The traits of professional experts (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986)

Stage	Salient characteristics
Novice	Adherence to taught rules Little situational perception No discretionary judgment
Advanced Beginner	Can recognize a pattern based on prior experience Limited situational perception Attributes treated separately and given equal importance
Competence	Clear pattern recognition Developing situational perception Conscious deliberate planning
Proficient	Perceives deviations from the normal pattern Sees situations holistically, rather than in terms of attributes Sees what is most important, using maxims for guidance Decision-making less laboured
Expert	Intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding No longer relies on rules, guidelines or maxims Vision of what is possible

A level textbook author expertise is often a culmination of years of teaching, examining and writing experience, but it goes beyond routine expertise (Dreyfus

and Dreyfus, 1986) and incorporates Timperley's (2013) notion of adaptive expertise as well as individual agency. Textbook authors draw on tacit and explicit knowledge intuitively (Polanyi, 1967), yet they do not necessarily realise it, because their actions are so habitual, that they pay them little attention. According to Timperley (2013, p.5) adaptive experts 'actively seek in-depth knowledge about the content of learning and how to teach it effectively'. Thus, being an author involves learning much more than the routine of the writing process, but also how to make effective decisions, balance competing demands, prioritise essential subject content, be able to write well and understand what it means to be an author.

Authors can be thought of as reflective practitioners, as well as routine and adaptive experts. Dewey (1916) identifies reflection as a specialised form of thinking. A reflective thinker being someone who considers 'any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it... to direct our actions with foresight' (Dewey, 1916, p.6). In other words, actions are intuitive and informed by theory and past experience, through a cyclical process of reflection, learning and understanding the situation from different perspectives. Drawing on the work of Dewey, Schön (1983) identifies how professionals can develop awareness of their implicit knowledge and learn from their experiences. He distinguishes reflection-in-action from reflection-on-action, the former being thinking in the moment, while it can still make a difference, the latter a form of after-the-event reflection about how things would be done differently in the future.

Timperley (2013, p.7) uses the term routine expertise to describe the novice to expert continuum that Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) developed, where through routine (repetition and practice) one can master a skill, then develop expertise in due course. To a certain degree, secondary teachers with multiple classes will teach a lesson, refine it and repeat (a form of reflection-on-action). However, authors only have one opportunity to publish content ready for student use and therefore they must be particularly effective practitioners who reflect both in-action and on-action from previous cycles of textbook production. The term adaptive expert (Hatano and Inagaki, 1986) can be used to describe effective

reflective practitioners. While discussing educators, Timperley (2013, p.5) suggests that adaptive experts:

- retrieve, organise and apply professional knowledge in the light of the challenges and needs presented by learners;
- obtain evidence of the impact of teaching on learners' engagement, learning and well-being;
- develop innovative approaches when regular routines are not working and to recognise when they need to seek help; and
- engage in ongoing inquiry with the aim of building the knowledge that is the core of professionalism.

Adaptive expert authors consequently accumulate knowledge and use their experience as the basis to assess what knowledge should be included in a textbook and why it is of value. Furthermore, authors draw on their knowledge and expertise to recontextualise knowledge from the parent discipline (its methods, prevailing paradigm and knowledge) for use in school geography. This human capital is an individual's strength, but educators do not work in a vacuum, as we will see in the next section, their expertise is much more powerful when shared.

### **2.4.3 *Social Capital***

Professional knowledge can be viewed as 'that body of knowledge and skills which is needed in order to function successfully in a particular profession' (Tamir, 1991, p.264). This aligns with human capital as discussed in the last section. Professional knowledge can be socially constructed. Wenger (1998, p.159) outlines how we gain shared expertise from others working in a particular community of practice. This shared expertise or social capital can significantly enhance professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). A community of practice generally relates to a particular context, such as an association of teachers, a learned society of fellows and so on where pedagogic rules regarding the production and transmission of knowledge are mutually agreed. Collaboration and networking provide educators with opportunities to be social and learn from each other (Piaget, 1952). Authors work collaboratively with other academics on subject knowledge, with other examiners on assessment and with other teachers on pedagogy. Wenger (1998, p.159) suggests that 'we engage in different

practices in each community of practice to which we belong. We often behave rather differently in each of them, construct different aspects of ourselves, and gain different perspectives'. In these different roles, authors serve as a bridge between universities and schools, the written and lived curriculum, as well as theory and practice.

Unlike teacher educators or teachers, authors do not have to relay the practical knowledge or tacit aspects of writing a textbook to others, yet these under-researched aspects of writing are the focus of this research. The next section focuses on the tacit aspects of writing a textbook and the dilemmas faced by authors.

#### **2.4.4 Decisional capital**

*Prowse (2011, p. 171) points out that writing textbooks is 'like having all the resources in the world available for you but having to locate them without a map, wearing a blindfold, and having your hands tied behind your back.*

(Lee and Catling, 2016a, p.353)

In this quote, Prowse (2011) hints at the almighty task of a textbook writer. This is somewhat compounded by additional demands asked of authors writing specifically at A level in terms of adhering to ALCAB policy guidance (Evans, 2014) provided by academics for core content and the prescribed curriculum as set out in examination specifications. The structure, aims and objectives of educational policy and the prescribed A level curriculum have scope to support educator agency, especially for the 40 per cent of non-core A level subject content which is not dependent on ALCAB guidance, but has been selected by assessment organisations for reasons such as continued success of a specification and positive student feedback.

A Level specification accreditation came in February (Edexcel, 2016), March (OCR, 2016), May (Eduqas, 2016) and June 2016 (AQA, 2016). Textbooks were then published just a few months later. With such a narrow window in which to write, authors had very little time to make a multitude of decisions about what content to include in an A level geography textbook. Some

decisions are complex and have a significant impact on the consequent writing, such as the structure of the textbook, pedagogical-underpinning and approach to knowledge. Others, such as the content of ‘Did you know’ information boxes and the choice of external sites to include as a resource link, are much easier and can be made quickly. Decisions which are of a more practical focus include how to deal with publisher comments, manage time with moving deadlines and write effectively from draft specifications. The choices outlined so far are fairly generic, and not specifically related to school geography.

The social world and knowledge of the social is complex. When deciding on what subject content to include in a textbook, a geography author must carefully select case studies, exemplars, data and assessment tasks, then present geographical content in the most suitable format for A level students. The complexity-accessibility continuum introduced by Taylor (2011) is a useful way of representing the process by which educators pitch subject content (Figure 9). If content is made too accessible by over-simplification of the complex and messy real-world, Taylor (2011, p.49) argues that content ‘may easily descend into stereotypes or make geographical models into the ends, rather than the starting points’. However, if this complexity is over-emphasised, Taylor (2011, p.49) suggests that ‘we may disappear into a curriculum of never-ending case studies’.



Figure 9 The spectrum between complexity and accessibility (Taylor, 2011)

Textbook authors write in a way that makes subject content accessible for the reader without losing sight of the dynamism, diversity and interconnections of the real world (Taylor, 2011). This requires the tacit understanding of semantic density, gravity and scale (Maton, 2014b). Semantic density is the ‘degree of condensation of meaning within socio-cultural practices’ where ‘more resides within than first appears’ (Maton, 2014a, p.130) and semantic gravity is ‘the degree to which meaning relates to its context’ (Maton, 2014a, p.129). In geography, the analogy of a semantic TARDIS can be used to describe a complex, abstract concept such as place. In order to support A level students to learn about

place, authors need to be able to take new concepts and move them from the abstract to the concrete and unpack the density by transmitting ideas in everyday language. The process of recontextualisation therefore strengthens the semantic gravity of abstract concepts and weakens the semantic density of complex concepts (Figure 10) via explanation, unpacking, repacking and embedding (Maton, 2014b).

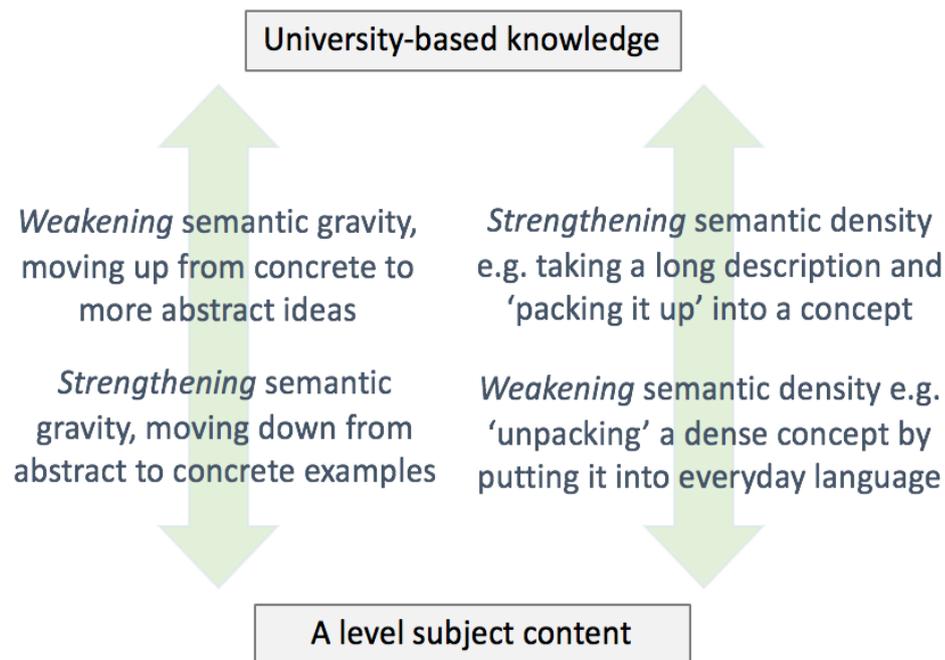


Figure 10 Semantic gravity and semantic density

Beyond the abstract and complex, authors also think about what can be explained effectively in text and how big geographical ideas or overarching concepts can be articulated (Taylor, 2013a; Lofthouse, 2011; Roberts, 2013) Deciding how to structure this knowledge can be all consuming as is suggested in the quote from Kincheloe and Steinburg (1998, cited in Rawling, 2007, p.32):

*The well-prepared teacher is not one who enters the classroom with a fixed set of lesson plans but a scholar with a thorough knowledge of the subject, an understanding of knowledge production, the ability to produce knowledge, an appreciation of social context, a cognisance of what is happening in the world, insights into the lives of her students, and a sophisticated appreciation of educational goals and purposes.*

Scholars can articulate big geographical ideas by thinking about the three inter-related aspects of the curriculum: subject content, school context and underpinning concepts as presented in Figure 11. Rawding (2013a, p.69) argues that ‘content should be seen in the context of the curriculum and must be a consequence of concepts’. Although textbook authors can write content in the context of the curriculum, they cannot set their work in the context of a particular school. Therefore, textbooks should never become ‘the curriculum’ on which teachers rely (Winter, 2017).

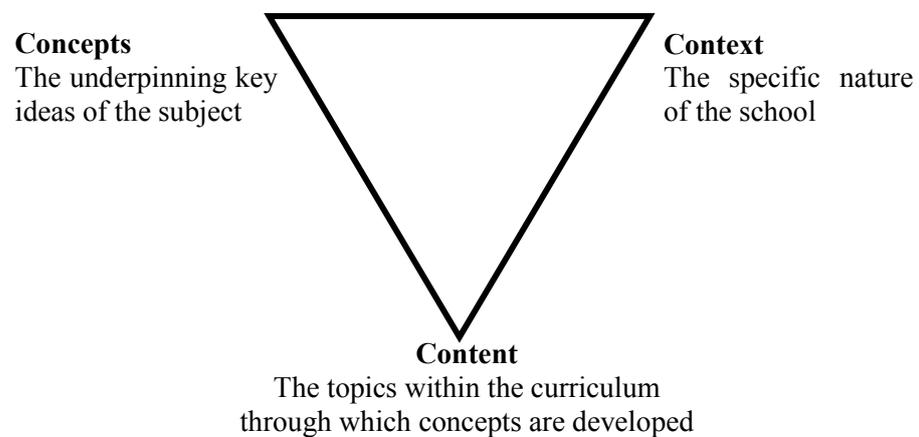


Figure 11 The relationship between concepts, content and context (Rawding, 2013a)

There are a number of constraints which impact on the writing process, such as those from the government, ALCAB, publishers and assessment organisations. Even so, there is still space for authors to achieve agency in their work as recontextualising agent. The concept of agency can be usefully defined as the capacity to act (Sewell, 1992). In recent years, educational research focused on the field of agency has significantly increased (Philpott and Oates, 2017), with research focusing on teacher agency, curriculum reform, the temporal dimensions of agency and teachers as change agents (Datnow, 2012; Priestley *et al.*, 2017; Van der Heijden *et al.*, 2015). My thinking is aligned with an ecological approach to agency (Priestley *et al.*, 2017) whereby agency is something to achieve rather than to have. The ecological approach to agency is an emergent phenomenon, with three temporal dimensions. It is rooted in the past experience, oriented towards future possibilities and is acted out in the present. This view of agency also aligns with the concept of professional agency where social capital is rooted in

experience and decisional capital is acted out in the present. In terms of textbook authors who work as agents of change during curriculum reform, we should therefore think about how authors achieve rather than have *agency* to define, curricularise and legitimise knowledge endorsed and transmitted into the classroom as a key aspect of decisional capital. Furthermore, authors with strong social capital who are well-connected and work actively and collaboratively within communities of practice, such as their subject communities, are much more likely to be able to achieve agency as they have a broader experience-base and shared understanding developed with their peers.

#### **2.4.5 *The nature of author expertise: a view from the publishers***

Oates (2014, p.4) suggests that the best textbooks are underpinned by ‘well-grounded learning theory, focused on ‘key concepts and knowledge’ and provide ‘coherent learning progressions within the subject’. In the same publication Nick Gibb suggests that ‘ideological hostility to the use of textbooks’ has had an impact on curriculum coherence and educational standards (Oates, 2014, p.2). The *Guidance for the Publishing of Geography Teaching Resources* (PA, 2015a, p.1) provides some clarification and is written with the aim of enhancing ‘the current teaching resource culture with a particular view to improving the geographical content, aims, coherence and depth of geography textbooks’. It outlines the key features of high-quality teaching resources for each of the EBacc subjects, under such headings as subject content; representation and design; and textbook authors and editors. The aim for geography is to ‘*enhance* the current teaching resource culture with a particular view to *improving* the geographical content, aims, coherence and depth of geography textbooks’ (PA, 2015a, p.1). The guidance suggests that textbooks are ‘authored and reviewed by people with expert knowledge, experience, skills and credibility’ who ‘draw on research evidence’ (PA, 2015a, Guidance 8.1, 8.3). It also suggests that high-quality geographical resources have ‘a clear author’s voice and narrative that tells a ‘geographical story’’, ‘is written with a disciplinary framework in mind’ and aims to ‘broaden pupils’ geographical knowledge and understanding beyond minimum examination requirements’ (PA, 2015a, Guidance 1.1-1.3). Arguably, A level content which goes beyond the specification may become unwieldy and require teachers to assume a greater role mediating the examination content of a textbook

from the superfluous, to support their students. Finally, Guideline 8.4 provides an expectation that ‘materials are trialled and refined in the light of trial data’ (PA, 2015a). This ideal is not possible in the current era of rapid curriculum change. For example, due to delays in accrediting new specifications during 2014 A level reforms, the window for writing textbooks was so narrow that time for editing and proof-reading was squeezed to the extent that teachers receiving evaluation copies spotted spelling mistakes and inaccuracies missed during quality control. To argue for a cyclical process of ‘trial and refine’ would compromise the education of students being taught in the first year of a revised specification with further delays to publication dates.

#### **2.4.6 *A gap in the literature***

The expertise of an A level geography textbook author comes from a number of professional roles; from teaching, teacher training, resource writing and examining. These cut across all three of Bernstein’s (1971) message systems: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Consequently, we can view textbook authors as specialist recontextualising agents with a unique and valuable skill set. Most studies of the recontextualisation of knowledge ‘have studied only what is *carried or relayed*, they do not study the constitution of the relay itself’ (Bernstein, 2000, p.25). The reader of a textbook can make a judgement about the nature of knowledge and how it has been selected, organised and presented in print, as well as assumptions about the author’s conceptions of the discipline and their approach to learning. Indeed, some research has followed this line of thinking, designed to gain insights into such matters as ethnocentric biases, representations of people and places, and the approach taken towards critical thinking, case studies and activities (Winter, 1997b; Roberts, 2007; Hopkin, 2001; Morgan, 2002; Lidstone 1992).

Although informative, such research presents the interpretations of textbooks by the researcher, rather than the perspectives and experiences of the textbook authors themselves. Research about the practice of authoring textbooks is under-studied (Waugh, 2000; Lee and Catling, 2016b). In a study of seven English authors on aspects of their textbook writing, expertise and perspectives, Lee and Catling (2016a, p.342) suggest that author expertise ‘has often been overlooked and, thus, devalued as simple “know-how”, and there is little in the

existing literature that recognises this'. Their research is not specific to a particular educational event, key stage or theme, and, by using only one research approach, a questionnaire, the authors accept that there are limits to their findings. The aim of my research is to redress this situation and capture a picture of author expertise around the complexity of decision-making when constructing, or more aptly recontextualising geography subject content focused on place for use in A level textbooks (Lee and Catling, 2016a, 2016b).

An understanding of the nature of author expertise and professionalism could further the Publishers Association's (2015a, 2015b) guidance which encourages the production of high-quality resources with the politicised aim of improving the UK's standing in international educational league tables (Oates, 2014; Gibb, 2014; PA, 2015b). Unlike teacher professionalism, which in schools in England is measured against official governmental Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011), there is no such bureaucratic control for the professionalism of textbook authors. A better understanding of author 'know-how' would therefore benefit publishers.

In addition, this study uses Q methodology as a way of collecting data about how authors conceive different aspects of place. Q methodology is commonly used with large numbers of statements in social sciences such as human geography (Eden *et al.*, 2005), but less frequently used in geography education. By reducing the Q-set from over 50 to 25 statements, this research has developed Q methodology which is much more practical for use with participants where time is a constraint for data collection.

## **2.5 Conceptual framework**

The overarching conceptual framework of this study is now presented in its entirety in preparation for moving into the research design chapter. A conceptual framework is a key aspect of research because it is a 'system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs' (Maxwell, 2005, p.39). My conceptual framework is informed by the extant literature, by discussions with others working in the field of education, in schools and universities, and from my own ideas as an educator and researcher. As

Maxwell (2005, p.40-1) points out, creating a conceptual framework solely from a body of publications can:

*lead to a narrow focus on the literature and tends to generate a strategy of covering the field rather than focusing specifically on those studies and theories that are particularly relevant to your research and can lead you to think that your task is simply descriptive – to report what previous researchers have found.*

Bernstein's (1990, 2000) notion of recontextualisation helped in the development stage of my research. Early on, I was certain that I wanted to focus on curriculum reform, A level subject knowledge, and the expertise of textbook authors in the role of recontextualising agent, but my conceptual framework was rather immature. My initial plan had been to frame my research around the concept of trajectories. When writing about place, Massey (2005) likened a city to a 'bundle of trajectories' and I felt that this analogy could also be applied to textbook authors, their experience and aspects of their writing, as they continually move in different directions. Guided by Maxwell's concerns and drawing on ideas from Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014), I delayed finalising my conceptual framework until I had developed themes from my data. After considering that my conceptual framework should explain 'the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts or variables – and the presumed relationships among them' (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.18), I felt that Bernstein's (2000) pedagogic device and Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) tripartite concept of professional capital (Figure 12) would better frame my research than the concept of trajectories.

The key ideas on which my conceptual framework has been developed are as follows:

1. The theory of knowledge structures which help us to understand how knowledge is formed, organised and transmitted. The pedagogic device describes the social process by which knowledge is converted or recontextualised by 'knowers' (Bernstein, 1990).

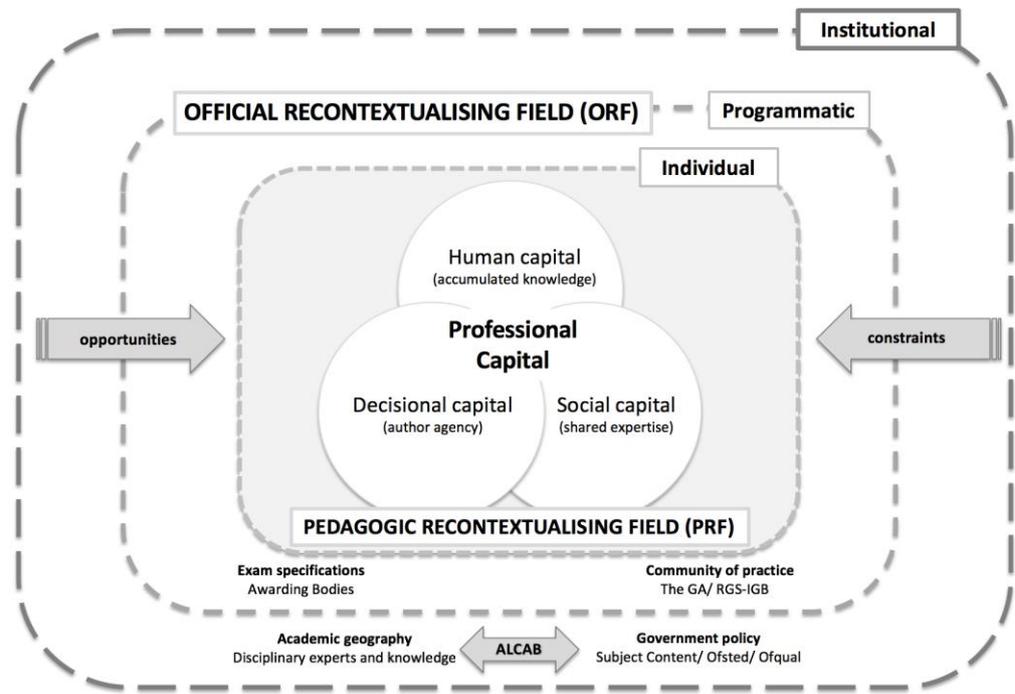


Figure 12 The conceptual framework, with author as the central concern

2. Textbook authors are knowers with agency to recontextualise knowledge, they work in the context of the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) and this position makes authors powerful members of their communit(y)ies of practice.
3. There is evidence that authors draw on a wide range of interrelated aspects of practical knowledge or knowing while writing, this intuitive, tacit knowledge is much more than ‘know-how’ and is somewhat difficult to explicate.
4. Authors are adaptive experts with significant professional capital which supports the production of textbooks. The theory of professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012) suggests that numerous aspects of human, social and decisional capital are utilised in professional practice. Being a professional is both an individual and collective responsibility. As textbook authors are a heterogenous group and hold different perspectives, there are similarities and differences in their practical knowledge.
5. A number of determinants influence the work of an author, these work at a range of scales from the national (curriculum policy) to the local (lived experience and networks). Authors draw on a range of formal and informal determinants during the writing process. Formal determinants include

institutional input from universities and the government, programmatic determinants from assessment organisations and shared understanding from the community of practice. Informal determinants include travel, everyday experiences and the media.

6. Geography is a multi-paradigmatic discipline and the definition of the central concept of place is complex, contested and open to debate. This suggests that authors must carefully mediate policy text in order to frame knowledge and (re)present geographical perspectives; avoiding simplification, stereotyping and othering of people and places.

## **2.6 Summary**

My literature review began by describing the place of knowledge in school and academic geography, setting out the context for curriculum change. It went on to explore Bernstein's theoretical concepts of curriculum framing and the pedagogic device, positioning authors as recontextualisers of curriculum knowledge who legitimise subject content in textbooks for use in schools. After briefly exploring the nature of knowledge, curriculum scenarios, knowledge structures and the two cultures debate, the literature review discussed the difficulty of applying Young's concept of powerful knowledge in the multi-paradigmatic discipline of geography. The chapter then outlined the purpose of the 2014 A level reforms and how ALCAB repositioned the concept of place in the A level curriculum to better reflect its central position in academic geography. It then discussed the purpose of textbooks and their potential for delivering quality and driving up standards especially at times of curriculum reform. The literature review then introduced Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) tripartite concept of professional capital to better understand expertise and the tacit knowledge required by authors to produce high quality resources. I concluded the chapter with my overarching conceptual framework which supported my thinking and research approach within a constructivist-interpretive framework.

The next chapter describes my research design, detailing the methodology and data collection techniques, which are aligned with an idiographic research approach as it focuses on the individual.

## Part II

### 3 Research Design

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored literature concerned with the curriculum, knowledge, textbooks and the professional capital of authors as recontextualising agents in the context of writing A level geography textbooks. This chapter outlines the research design used in this study.

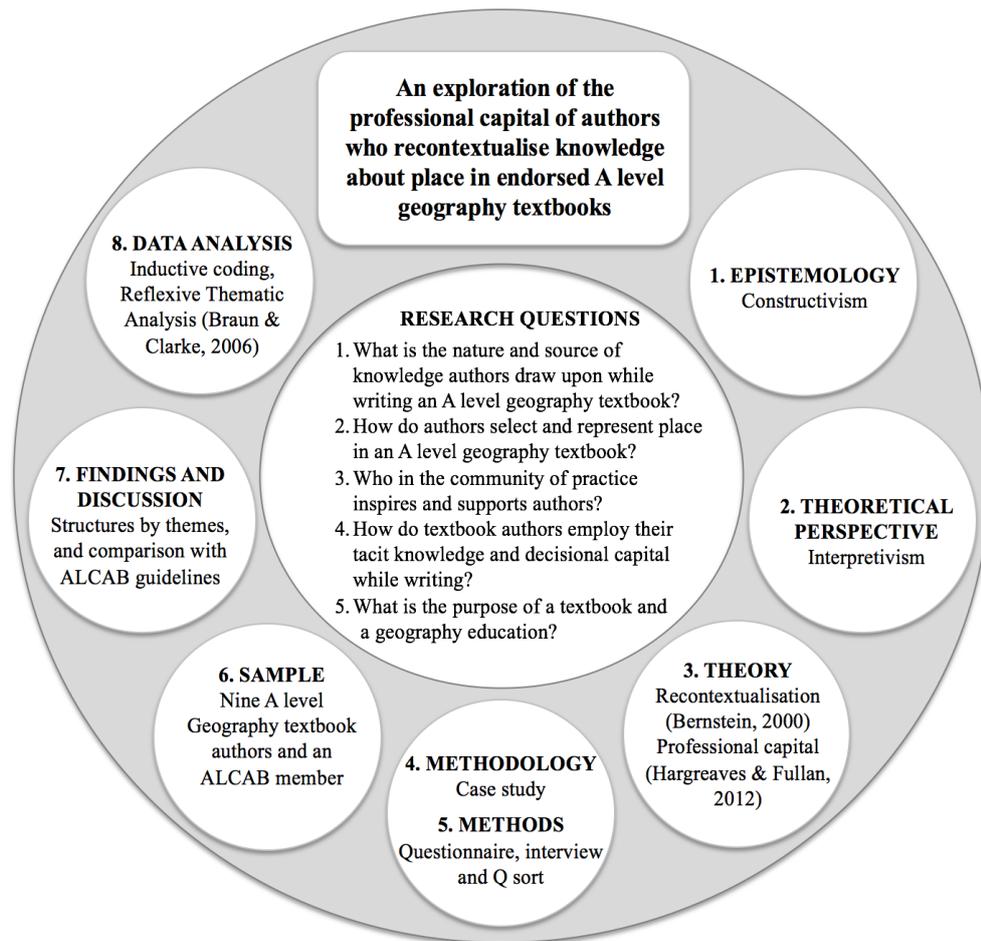


Figure 13 The golden thread running through my research

This chapter begins with a reminder of the golden thread (after Sui, 2016) running through my research. Figure 13 shows the centrality of my research questions to each element of my study. The methodology and methods are single threads which are integral to the strength of the whole project. The chapter then provides a summary of the aims of the study, an outline of the research questions and consideration of my positionality as ‘an insider’ researcher and member of the

geography education community of practice. Philosophical and methodological underpinnings are discussed, along with a rationale for the methodology and methods used in my research. The research process is then outlined, providing a transparent step-by-step method for data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes by considering the evaluation of my research, my ethical considerations and research integrity, concluding by outlining how my pilot study informed the main phase of research.

### **3.2 Study aims and research questions**

*Research questions are like a door to the research field under study*

(Flick, 2006, p.111)

There has been a very limited amount of research focused on educational resources with textbook authors rather than textbooks as the central concern. This thesis addresses the gap in the literature outlined in Section 2.4.6 and opens the door to this area of research. It uses questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a Q-sort activity to explore A level geography textbook authors' perceptions of place, the source and type of knowledge authors draw upon, the people who inspire authors and the process by which authors select and recontextualise knowledge about place in a textbook. By listening to the people who recontextualise knowledge in A level textbooks for use by A level teachers and their students, this thesis ultimately questions what and whose knowledge is being legitimised for use in schools.

Initially, four open-ended research questions were created that were broad enough 'so as to not limit the views of participants' (Creswell, 2014, p.139), yet provide clarity and direction to scaffold the rest of the study. These research questions were focused on conceptions of place, sources of knowledge and the selection of places for inclusion in textbooks and the role of the author in the writing process. Research questions were short-listed, adapted and refined as suggested by Punch (2005). Spending time on the choice and wording of the research questions was important because the 'data collection, analysis and findings should flow from them' (Catling, 2015, p.172). Punch's (2005, p.46)

criteria for good research questions provided a useful tool to consider whether questions were ‘clear, specific, answerable, interconnected and worthwhile’. As my research progressed, I reviewed the research questions to confirm that they still underpinned my research. If they did not still fit, I revised them. The final revision added a question focused on the social capital of authors, this gap was exposed during data analysis and is discussed below.

My research is an exploration of the professional capital of A level geography authors and how they recontextualise knowledge about place in endorsed textbooks. As the overarching research enquiry has multiple strands, it has been sub-divided into the following five separate, yet connected, research questions:

- RQ1. What is the nature and source of knowledge authors draw upon while writing an A level geography textbook?
- RQ2. How do textbook authors employ their tacit knowledge and decisional capita while writing?
- RQ3. Who in the community of practice inspires and supports authors?
- RQ4. How do authors select and represent place in an A level geography textbook?
- RQ5. What is the purpose of a textbook and a geography education?

It was always the intention to focus on how authors conceive place, the source of knowledge about place and the process by which authors select and recontextualise place in a textbook. However, when completing data analysis and revising the literature review, the tripartite concept of professional capital was seen to be a useful addition to the conceptual framework, therefore Research Question 3 was added. An outline of each research questions is now provided, setting the scene for the rest of the research design chapter.

### **3.2.1 *RQ1: What is the nature and source of knowledge authors draw upon while writing an A level geography textbook?***

Knowledge is a contested concept, with much debate between and within disciplines as to how it is generated, legitimised, valued and transmitted. Place is an abstract, complex concept and a central concern for geographers. Considering

the multi-paradigmatic nature of academic geography, how place is understood by authors is plural, contested and changing and strongly influenced by their specific educational and lived experience. This research question seeks to understand authors' accumulated capital and geographical perspectives, as well as the nature and source of knowledge authors draw upon when writing about place in A level Geography textbooks. It further seeks to understand how authors validate knowledge as they recontextualise it.

**3.2.2 *RQ2: How do authors select and represent place in an A level geography textbook?***

The existing literature on geography textbooks is critical of the selection (Lee and Catling, 2016a), ethnocentric bias (Winter, 1997b) and representation (Roberts, 2007) of places in school geography textbooks. Yet, a quick comparison of competing A level geography textbooks reveals that some places and case studies are frequently selected, often presented in similar formats with a slightly different focus. This alludes to the idea that authors are influenced by similar determinants, such as contemporary global issues, extreme events and newsworthy places. This research question asks authors to think about how they select places for inclusion in a textbook chapter and their justification for these choices.

**3.2.3 *RQ3: Who in the community of practice inspire and support authors?***

With an understanding of knowledge as a social construct, formed and validated by a specialised community of practice, this research question develops an understanding of the people who inspire and support authors. Developing social capital with others is one of the three key aspects of professional capital and this research question recognizes the value of collaboration and networking opportunities as a space to share, debate and negotiate issues of epistemology and pedagogy.

**3.2.4 *RQ4: How do textbook authors employ their tacit knowledge and decisional capital while writing?***

Wheelahan (2006, Endnote) suggests that 'the whole field of knowledge production cannot be reproduced in its entirety in the curriculum. This means that a process of selection and recontextualisation must take place'. Textbooks provide little, if any, evidence or justification of what content authors choose to include

or exclude. This gap in our understanding of decisional capital is addressed by this research question. Rather than analysing textbooks, this research question harnesses the perspectives of textbook authors. It seeks to better understand the decisional capital of authors, why they make particular choices and more broadly the process of recontextualisation. The decisions made by an author are not made in isolation. They are influenced by the regulative discourse of the geography education community and more pragmatic considerations of the instructional discourse (Bernstein, 1990, 2000), including meeting the needs of the publishers who fund the project and the assessment organisations who endorse it.

### **3.2.5 *RQ5: What is the purpose of a textbook and a geography education?***

The literature describes the purpose of A level textbooks as vehicles to deliver ‘elitist’ academic knowledge (Standish, 2012), widen higher education participation (Pykett and Smith 2009) and drive up standards to better bridge the school/academy divide (Mathison and Woodward, 2013). According to education policy, textbooks should allow students to ‘develop knowledge and understanding of the subject...engage critically with real world issues and places...and grow as independent thinkers and as informed and engaged citizens’ (DfE, 2014a, p.3). Morgan (2003b, p.460) suggests that ‘textbook interpretations are written so as to give the impression that they offer a transparent “window” on reality, they are, in fact, cultural productions and are capable of being read in different ways’. Authors play a key role as ‘prophets’ (Bernstein, 2000) recontextualising knowledge for use in schools. In doing so, they need to appreciate and prioritise the competing demands of policy, examination specifications and publishers with their own ideas of what constitutes good textbook content. This research question aims to better understand the purpose of a textbook, from the perspective of authors. More subtly, it provides the space for authors to reflect on their role in the production of a textbook and whether they give voice to any particular agendas.

## **3.3 Philosophical underpinnings and methodology**

It is important to make clear a number of fundamental philosophical issues and assumptions, as our theoretical perspective, view of reality and theory of knowledge underpin the entire research process (Figure 14).

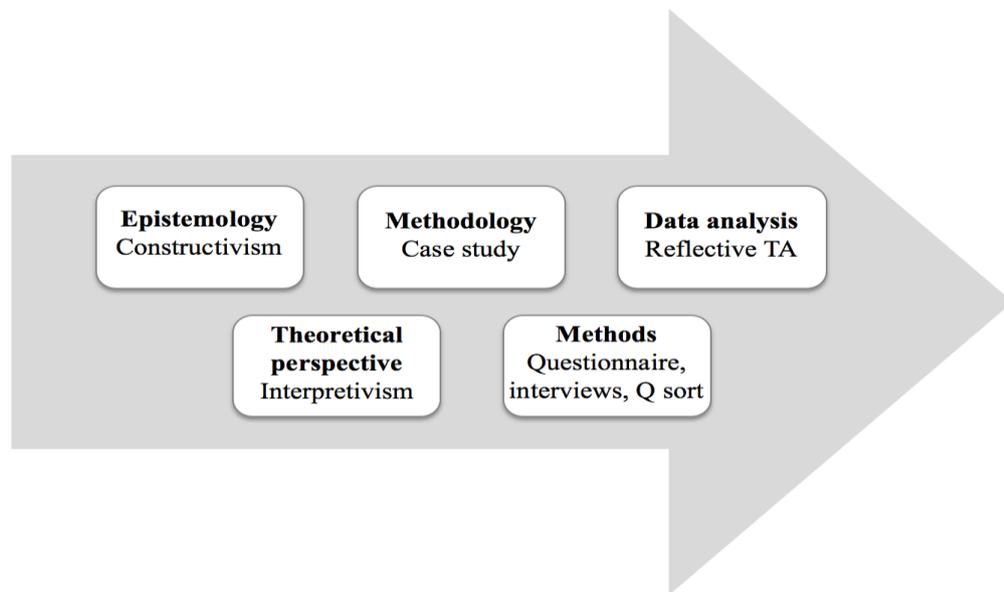


Figure 14 Philosophical underpinnings and methodology

Coe (2012, p.5) suggests that the philosophical position a researcher adopts ‘determines the kind of research that is worth doing’. Crotty (1998, p.2) sets out four epistemological questions worth answering when developing a research proposal, as follows:

1. ‘What epistemology informs this theoretical perspective?’
2. What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?
3. What methodology governs our choice and use of methods?
4. What methods do we propose to use?’

My epistemology and theoretical perspective are set out next, after a brief discussion of ontology. The final two questions are answered in Section 3.5 and 3.7.

Turning first to my view of reality. My research is underpinned by relativist ontology or the belief that there are multiple constructed realities (Merriam, 1998), such that ‘what we can know reflects where and how knowledge is generated’ (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.27). This study has a concern for understanding the individual (*idios*) with an interest in the ‘subjective, relativistic social world’ rather than ‘the general and the universal... of an absolutist, external reality’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p.6). Crotty’s (1998, p.66) idea that ‘different ways

of viewing the world shape different ways of seeing the world' fits well with this idea of a subjective reality.

A concern for epistemology, or how we know what we know, can help decide 'what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate' (Maynard, 1994, p.10). Suchman (1995, p.574) helpfully defines legitimacy as an 'assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions'. My research is underpinned by epistemological assumptions where knowledge is perspectival, seeking to better understand the process of textbook writing according to the opinions and perspectives of textbook authors themselves.

Aligned with constructivism, the study takes on the theoretical perspective of interpretivism. Geertz (1973) was a proponent of interpretivism, arguing that the scientific method (explored in Section 2.2.6) was too reductionist. A scientific or nomothetic approach to research favours quantitative research, testing and generalisations, whereas this research is aligned with an idiographic research approach as it focuses on the individual. Geertz (1973) drew on the hermeneutic tradition to interpret meaning and understand multiple realities of individuals rather than seeking one objective reality. This study follows a case study methodology, which has been used in geography education research to produce 'individualistic and multifaceted' studies (Hopwood, 2012, p.163) to reveal 'depth and holism' from a small sample (Picton, 2008, p.230), providing a nuanced understanding of the research focus (Taylor, 2013c). This study will consequently expand the body of geography education research, which uses a small-scale, idiographic case study approach.

Constructivists believe that there is no universal truth, no one 'reality' waiting to be discovered (Merriam, 1998), but rather a diversity of interpretations to be known, as people construct meaning (or truth) in 'processes of social interchange' (Flick, 2014, p.78). The idea that realities are not objectively 'out there' but are rather constructed by people and shaped by social and cultural factors (Guba and Lincoln 1989, p.12) is key to constructivism.

*In a fairly unremarkable sense, we are all constructivists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge...human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it.*

(Schwandt, 1998, p.237)

This diversity of ideas is, in part, due to human activities and actions being *situated* and richly affected by the specific context in which they take place. As Allen and Massey (1995, p.2) point out ‘our knowledge of the world is always from a certain standpoint, a certain location. We see it from here rather than from there’. Such a view aligns with standpoint theory. This is the theory that people interpret the world from a particular viewpoint in light of their experiences in the world (Taylor, 2004), their identity (including their gender and religion), their contextual cultural reference points (Hirsch, 1988) and their own situation or *thrownness* into the world (Heidegger 1927). Our situatedness ‘depends on our existing ways of thinking’ (Roberts, 2013, p.19), as well as our lived experiences, both of which we draw on when trying to understand and make sense of the world for ourselves (Barnes and Todd, 1995). Consequently, knowledge construction or meaning making (Merriam, 1998) is a complex activity, requiring a conceptual framework on which to hang new knowledge. This knowledge is then incorporated with what we already know, modified and continuously refined in the process of learning. This aligns with the notion of schema which describes the mental structures used to organise knowledge (Barnes and Todd, 1995). Conducting research within a constructivist-interpretive framework (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) provides the opportunity for finely-grained descriptions (Butt, 2010) and highly individual accounts (Hopwood, 2012) of authors’ experiences of writing A Level Geography textbooks, which are presented in the Research Findings (Chapter 4-8).

A level textbook authors are experts at developing, modifying and refining their own knowledge. As authors continually broaden their experiences, extend their tacit knowledge and become *more* expert, they are likely to act more intuitively and develop stronger professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). With this in mind, my research strategy has a concern for how individual authors make sense of reality (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Guba and Lincoln, 1989), then

re-construct their unique version of reality in a textbook while engaging with education policy, ALCAB advice, publishers' guidelines and assessment requirements.

### **3.4 The researcher and the researched**

Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p.10) outline three pertinent issues for this study:

*Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.*

Where the object of study is people capable of making meaning, as is the case in my study, then the view of the researcher can only ever be partial (Bryman, 2012). It is only a glimpse of how the participants saw the issue on the particular day of the interview. To understand the context of the research and acquire social knowledge, it is helpful to positively value my subjectivity. Flick (2014, p.17) suggests that:

*Qualitative methods take the researcher's communication with the field and its members as an explicit part of knowledge instead of deeming it an intervening variable. The subjectivity of the researcher and of those being studied becomes part of the research process.*

My insider position, gained with experience as teacher, consultant and student, has given me insight into the complexity of textbook writing, but as Braun and Clarke (2013, p.10) point out 'we are likely to have multiple insider and outsider positions'. As a teacher, my timetable was dominated by A level classes, increasing my awareness of how textbooks were used in the classroom. As a consultant, I had opportunities to discuss subject content, including the new A level topic of Changing Places, with other educators at conferences and teacher training events. I am therefore deeply intertwined with my research as 'data and analysis are created from shared experiences with participants' (Charmaz, 2014, p.330).

Being a postgraduate student set me apart from the school teacher community, giving me an outsider position. This led me to adopt a reflexive approach to my research, where I question my choices at every stage of the research process (Braun and Clarke, 2013). For example, when choosing potential participants, I followed Valentine's (1997, p.113) advice 'to reflect on who you are and how your own identity will shape the interactions you have with others'. Therefore, I invited authors from the geography education community with whom I had developed 'rapport and trust' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.10) to take part in my research. Having established relationships meant participants felt at ease during interview and allowed more detailed responses than might be expected from strangers.

### **3.5 Methodological underpinnings**

Methodology, also known as research strategy (Taber, 2007), is a way of studying social reality following particular 'procedures or logic' (Waring, 2012, p.16). Choosing a case study methodology 'provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data' (Bryman, 2012, p.46) with a focus on words and meanings (Stake, 1995). Bryman (2012, p.66) defines case study as the 'detailed analysis of a single event' using methods 'which strive to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p.290). These methods often include documents, archival records, interviews, observation and artefacts (Yin, 2013). With no consensus as to whether the case study approach is a methodology or method (Bryman, 2012, p.45), the procedures set out in the seminal texts by Yin (2013), Stake (1995) and Merriam (1998) are supportive of the former and this is the methodological stance I support.

A case is 'a specific, a complex, functioning thing' (Stake, 1995, p.2). One of the struggles with case study design can arise when deciding what constitutes the 'case' and the parameters of the 'bounded system' (Smith, 1978; Stake, 1995). These parameters, according to Thomas (2011, p.515), can be set by 'spatial, temporal, personal, organizational or other'. The unit of analysis for my study does not use spatial parameters. Instead, it is the specific phenomena of authors' professional capital employed in the process of writing an endorsed A Level Geography textbook published in 2016 which is under investigation. Case study

design offers flexibility and the opportunity for participants to provide their own views and opinions following an idiographic approach. My research is closely bound within a particular group of authors who write about a particular subject focused at students of a particular age group. My methodology and methods could be used in a similar study in different contexts. However, similar findings would not necessarily emerge due to the dominant influence of the specific temporal context of my research.

The particular strength of case study research lies in 'its ability to enable the researcher to intensively investigate the case in-depth, to probe, drill down and get at its complexity' (Day Ashley, 2012, p.102). By including Q-sort to explore authors' subjectivity and make sense of their understanding of the concept of place (Section 3.7.3), my methodology goes beyond a purely qualitative approach with data collected from semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Such methods are epistemologically and methodologically complimentary and 'appropriate to the issue under study' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.138), having been carefully selected to 'make the world visible in a different way' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p.5). This triangulation of data sources, perspectives and methods provides a more complex understanding of the research focus (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Illuminating the case from more than one standpoint helps to construct research validity (Patton, 1987) and rigour (Flick, 2014).

There are 'several types of case study' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p.290). According to Merriam's (1998) criteria of case study types (descriptive, interpretative, and evaluative), this is an interpretive case study, differentiated from descriptive case studies by their depth, complexity and theoretical orientation. Yin (2013) identifies three types of case study. My research fits best with an exploratory rather than a descriptive or explanatory type because it is focused on an underexplored area of geography education research. The participants in my research are all on different journeys through life in the same way that Massey (2005) sees places as 'bundles of trajectories' and are connected to each by their shared experience of writing A level Geography textbooks. Authors' perspectives and opinions are shaped by their lived experience, identity and social interactions. On one hand, these cases can be considered 'typical' or 'representative' (Yin, 2013) of all A Level geography authors. However, Thomas

(2011, p.578) questions this notion, as each case study is ‘a particular representation given in context and understood in that context’.

Complimenting my research strategy, is the use of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun *et al.*, 2019; Braun and Clarke, 2006), a form of inductive analysis used to make sense of data collected from the nine A level Geography textbook authors. Inductive analysis refers to approaches which ‘allows the theory to emerge from the data’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.12). Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun *et al.*, 2019) is conceptually coherent with a case study approach and inductive coding and theme development and it emphasises the active role of the researcher in the process of knowledge production.

### **3.6 Participants and Sampling**

In exploratory research, there is ‘no universal standard’ (Mears, 2012, p.171) sample size. Research methods textbooks suggest that the sample should remain in single figures, otherwise there is too much data to analyse (Flick, 2014; Braun and Clarke, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2009). Merriam (1998, p.66) advises that purposive sampling precedes data collection and theoretical sampling occurs ‘in conjunction with data collection’. Consequently, I developed a purposive sampling strategy to gather data from nine A level Geography textbook authors, based on the expectation of rich data. The total population of authors for the seven endorsed A level geography textbooks is 39 (see Table 1), of which nine were in the sample. Nine out of 39 is a sizeable sample, proportionally speaking. Selecting more participants would reduce the possibility of anonymity and consequently the opportunity for authors to speak freely about textbook production. However, theoretical sampling was not ruled out until the richness of the dataset was confirmed. Bearing in mind the intent of this research was not to generalise findings due to its ‘rootedness in context’ (Flick, 2014, p.495), an expressive rather than large sample was desired. While data analysis was taking place, I decided that an additional interview with a member of the A Level Content Advisory Body (ALCAB) would provide an additional voice to the research. This interview provided data from an additional perspective (Smith *et al.*, 2009), giving reassurance about my interpretation of the purpose and development of formal A level geography subject content.

Convenience sampling is an example of non-probability sampling and is ‘not conducted according to the canons of probability sampling’ (Bryman, 2012, p.201). Knowing a number of textbook authors in a professional capacity meant that it was possible to directly approach individuals and ask whether they would participate in my research. With an awareness of sample stratification, I attempted to select authors with diverse characteristics. For example, four of the nine authors are female, two are novice A level textbook authors and two are practising teachers. All the authors are British White. Ethnic minorities are under-represented in my sample, in the total population of geography textbook authors, and to a lesser degree the population of secondary teachers, with 9.9 per cent identifying themselves as ethnic minorities (Steel, 2015). It was desirable that the participants in my study represented a novice-expert continuum of professional experience (Petcovic *et al.*, 2014) and a ‘variety of perspectives in order to get a better, more stable view of ‘reality’ based on a wide spectrum of observations’ (Dervin, 1983, p.7). My intent was to sample authors who had worked on different examination specifications, with different publishing houses and with a range of previous writing experience to represent a range of perspectives (Smith *et al.*, 2009, p.49). In the end, authors from five different publications were sampled (Table 10). Furthermore, there was a desire to include several authors who had written on the *Changing Places* core theme, as well as some who had written other geography topics where place along with space, scale and environment (DfE, 2014a) were the underpinning disciplinary concepts.

Table 10 Publishers and assessment organisations represented by textbook authors

	<b>AQA</b>	<b>Edexcel</b>	<b>OCR</b>
Cambridge University Press	10		
Hodder	5	6	5
Oxford University Press	4	4	
Pearson		5	

The response rate for the nine textbook authors invited to participate in my research was 100 per cent. With busy diaries, it did take several months to schedule and complete data collection, allowing transcription and initial data analysis to occur in quick succession to the interviews while fresh in my mind.

A co-constructed biography for each author, avoiding identifiable information is presented in Table 11. Pseudonyms are used in my thesis for this purpose. In addition, the combined characteristics of authors are provided in Table 12.

Table 11 Author biographies

Author biographies
<p><b>Linda</b> is a geography teacher, resource writer and editor who has worked on a variety of projects across the key stages 1-5, including award-winning online resources. Linda has a degree in Geography and more than five years of experience in the water industry before doing her PGCE. She has travelled widely. Linda is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and worked as a GCSE Examiner for two assessment organisations.</p>
<p><b>Jem</b> is a former Head of Geography, who has worked in secondary schools for over two decades and as a PGCE Tutor and Geography Education Consultant. She is a Fellow of the RGS and has presented at a number of conferences and CPD events. Jem has written a number of GCSE and A level textbooks, journal articles and online resources. She values learning beyond the classroom through fieldwork, exchange programmes and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.</p>
<p><b>Sam</b> is an experienced Head of Geography, member of the RGS, recipient of the RGS Ordnance Survey award and active member and Consultant to the Geographical Association. When writing, Sam likes to connect with academics and geographers to enrich his projects. He is clear that curriculum making by teachers is essential for professional development and always looks for opportunities to bring his interests related to landscape and place into his teaching and his work for publishers and organisations.</p>
<p><b>Olly</b> was a teacher and Head of Geography/Humanities faculty for 35 years and has written throughout that time for geography publications and the TES. Olly led annual geography fieldtrips for sixth form geographers to the Lake District for many years and these week-long immersions in geography have been a standout experience. Olly managed a school link between his school and one in South Africa, with exchanges of letters, students and teachers. He has attempted to make geography of fundamental significance to teachers' and students' lives in their daily actions and choices.</p>
<p><b>Ash</b> is a former geography teacher, working in a number of schools for over two decades and is now a freelance geography education consultant, splitting his time between resource writing, editing and examining. He has presented at a number of conferences and CPD events. Ash is a magazine editor. He has co-written a number of textbooks and has written over 100 articles for a range of publications. He is a recipient of the RGS Ordnance Survey award, and he has published widely including with the Geographical Association.</p>
<p><b>Paul</b> is an experienced geography teacher and Principal Examiner at A level. He has co-authored a number of Geography textbooks and written articles for a</p>

Author biographies
range of geographical publications. Paul has extensive experience of providing teacher training, working with colleagues to improve the delivery of A level Geography. He sees building bridges between school and university geography as a key activity for teachers. He also thinks examiners should be informed about geographical content and techniques from academics when developing the A level curriculum.
<b>Rebus</b> is an experienced Head of Geography and recipient of the RGS Ordnance Survey award. As a researcher, her main interest is in curriculum making and the conceptualisation of geographical knowledge. Rebus believes that a quality geography education has real power to transform the lives of students and the places in which they live. This is the main driving force behind her involvement in a range of geography education projects from authoring resources and textbooks to delivering CPD courses.
<b>Vic</b> is a former Head of Geography, PGCE Tutor and freelance geography consultant. He is an active member of the GA, contributing to the annual conference, providing advice at teacher training events and supporting the educational charity. Vic is a regular contributor to many geography education journals and has developed a range of teaching materials for both GCSE and A level students.
<b>Ron</b> is an experienced Head of Geography who worked in high achieving secondary schools, then became a Lecturer in Education at a Russell Group University. Ron has co-authored a number of Geography textbooks and has worked as an author and editor of Wideworld magazine. As a member of the Geographical Association, she has lectured at the annual conference and contributed to their journal Teaching Geography.

Table 12 Characteristics of the nine textbook authors, at the time of data collection

<b>Age range (years)</b>		<b>Teaching experience (years)</b>	
18-39	1	11-20	3
40-49	3	21-30	4
50-59	1	31>	2
60>	4		
<b>Highest level of education</b>		<b>Number of previous publications</b>	
BSc/BA degree level	3	0-10	2
MSc/MA level	3	11-20	2
Doctorate level	3	21>	5
<b>ITE or CPD provision (years)</b>		<b>Assessment experience (years)</b>	
0	1	0	1
1-10	2	1-10	2
11-20	5	11-20	1
21>	1	21>	5

Data were collected from a two-page questionnaire, semi-structured interviews lasting between 50 and 80 minutes and a Q-sort card activity focused on the concept of place. These methods are described in detail in Section 3.7. Data collection occurred in 2016/2017, shortly after textbook construction, when details about the process of textbook writing could be easily recalled by the nine authors who participated in my study.

### **3.7 Research methods**

It was important to use multiple methods to capture some of the complexity of the world in my research. As Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.8) suggest:

*There are no simple explanations for things. Rather events are the result of multiple factors coming together and interacting in complex and often unanticipated ways. Therefore, any methodology that attempts to understand experience and explain situations will have to be complex.*

Data sources used in my research included A level policy documents, examination specifications, endorsed A level Geography textbooks, as well as the perspectives of textbook authors captured using questionnaires, interviews and a Q-sort activity (Figure 15). The most important source of data for my research is the authors themselves. However, to triangulate their perspectives, I have selected some textbook content for inclusion where relevant, this is most notable when discussing place selection. The triangulation of perspectives and methods was used to combine methods and illuminate the research from more than one standpoint (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Flick, 2014). ‘The choice of which methods to employ in one’s research has a direct impact on the subsequent quality of the research findings’ (Butt, 2010, p.103).

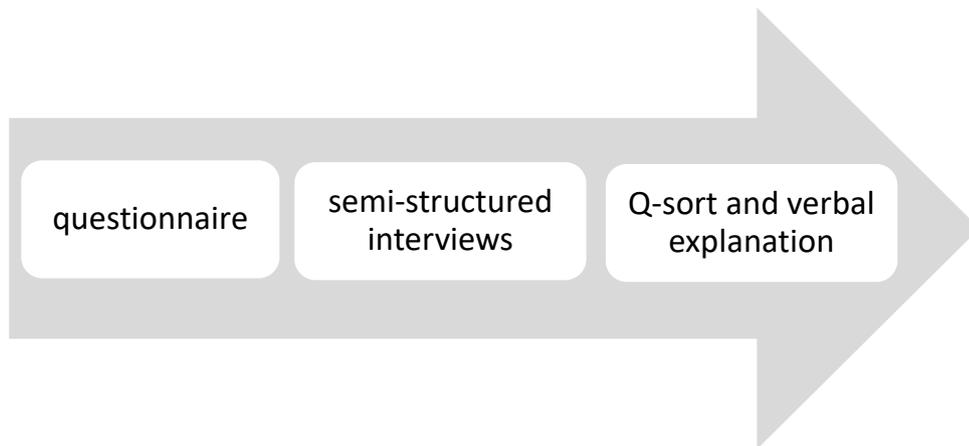


Figure 15 The order in which the multiple methods were used in this study

My methods were selected to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of authors (Kvale, 2007), while being mindful of Yardley’s (2000, p.219) four characteristics of good qualitative research: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. Each method will now be discussed in turn.

### 3.7.1 *Questionnaire*

A written questionnaire was used as a convenient paper-based tool for collecting information from participants (Bryman, 2012; Tymms, 2012) ‘to give different angles on the research problem’ (Taylor, 2015, p.176). Questionnaires are a systematic method as they are designed to ask the same questions, in the same format, to every participant. The self-completion questionnaire used in my research was created to capture data using closed and open (short and extended) questions (Bryman, 2012). Short-response questions were designed with limited space for participants to provide responses (Tymms, 2012); some designed in a table format for place examples and others with a single line to signal the requirement for succinct responses. Open-ended questions were included with more space to allow for extended answers. These questions focused on the characteristics of significant places, place taught as a stand-alone unit and activities which avoid stereotypes of place (Table 13). The use of open-ended questions invited ‘an honest, personal comment from respondents’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p.392) and allowed participants to justify and develop the points that they make.

Table 13 Questionnaire content organised by question type

Question type	Examples from the questionnaire
Short, open questions	Which places are significant/worth of study at A level in the UK/Europe/worldwide? What do you understand by the concept of a distant place? Define place. Explain why it is/isn't important to learn about distant places in geography.
Extended, open questions	Explain whether it is important for students to have a good geographical understanding of their own locality. Explain whether you think place should be investigated in A level geography as a stand-alone unit. Describe at least six characteristics of significant places. Describe how you have developed knowledge about different places. Explain how we can avoid stereotypes and misconceptions of the places we study in geography.
Drawing task	Draw a picture of a successful place you are familiar with.

A questionnaire provides authors with the opportunity to share their views without influence from the *interviewer effect*, where interviewer characteristics can 'bias the answers that respondents provide' (Bryman, 2012, p.233). Concerns that participants can 'deliberately falsify their replies' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011 p.388) were mitigated by verifying some of the authors' questionnaire responses during the interview and converging data sources from multiple methods via triangulation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). For transparency, questionnaire responses defining place and significant places, and the selection of places in the UK, Europe and worldwide were referred to in the subsequent interview. Authors were asked during interview to what informed their definitions of place and significant place. They were also asked to justify the process by which they selected the list of places in the UK, Europe and worldwide. It was the justification of these choice which was somewhat more important than the places themselves, as this decision-making process gives an insight into the decision-making process authors go through when selecting content for a textbook chapter.

The number of questions in the questionnaire were limited to ten, minimising the 'respondent burden' (Denscombe, 2009, p.288) or effort needed to complete the questionnaire and the likelihood of non-response to some or all of

the questions. Non-responses to individual questions known as response bias is a concern if the missing data is focused on a particular issue (Tymms, 2012). There are disadvantages of the self-completion questionnaire, most notably that the researcher cannot prompt, probe or collect additional data (Bryman, 2012). This is why participants were asked to complete the questionnaire prior to interview, so that any missing data could be elaborated upon during interview, for example justifying the choice of significant place examples.

Drawing tasks or visual methods are commonly used in educational research (Rose, 2007), including geography education research, for example Holt *et al.* (2008) ask children to draw mental maps of their local play places. In this study, Question 10 asked authors to produce an image of a successful place they were familiar with, in order to elicit visual data to compliment written and conversation data. Grady (2001 cited in Karlsson, 2012, p.94) suggests that images 'encode data about values, norms and practices that are often inaccessible to other forms of collecting and reporting information' and are therefore worth collecting. The aim was to tease out ideas about the authors' sense of place, although it is appreciated that such a task can be challenging and unreliable as a method used on its own. The choice and features of places represented including landmarks, people, objects, 'contradictions and complex issues' (Cohen, *et al.* 2011, p.589) can be informative. These features were itemised, coded and grouped into themes and used to compare the visual representations from different authors. Due to the small sample size, quantitative analysis was not conducted. It may be that textbook authors holding particular views about place, knowledge and the purpose of textbooks represent place in a particular way.

Once an author agreed to be involved in my research, they received a questionnaire via email and then an interview date was secured. Sending the questionnaire ahead of the interview allowed authors to respond at leisure without the added pressure of completion with me sat waiting in anticipation. The questionnaire was sent in PDF or Word format to allow it to be filled in electronically or printed and filled in by hand. Three authors returned electronic versions and six completed hard copies of the questionnaire and returned them to me when we met. A final email was sent to authors to confirm the mutually agreed

time and location for interview and remind them to bring their completed questionnaires. This mitigated the potential problem of non-response.

Questionnaires are a more popular method in geography education studies in comparison to discussions, interviews and documentary methods (Freeman, 2008; Roberts, 2007; Hopkin, 1998). Questionnaires are frequently used with a large sample size, or as part of a multiple method strategy. Lambert (1999) used questionnaires as a practical method to follow-up observations on the use of textbooks in Key Stage Three (KS3) geography classrooms (with 11 to 14-year-old students), Romig (2016) solicited student perceptions of electronic textbooks and Dolan *et al.* (2014) asked student teachers about their previous experience of learning geography. Lee and Catling (2016a, 2016b; Catling and Lee, 2017) made the choice to use open-ended questionnaires over interviews to seek out the perceptions of geography textbook authors on writing textbooks for reasons of timing, accessibility and flexibility. Due to the small sample size in this study, data from the questionnaires was analysed concurrently with interview data. The process of data analysis used in this study is described in Section 3.8.

### 3.7.2 *Interviews*

*If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives,  
why not talk with them?* (Kvale, 2007, p.1)

An interview is a conversation between researcher and respondent, designed to gain a deeper understanding of an issue from the point of view of the informant. Defined as ‘a face-to-face verbal interchange’ (Dunn, 2000, p.51), an interview brings people into the research process to hear about their experiences and ideas, as ‘there is no better introduction to a population than the people themselves’ (Kearns, 1991, p.2). Interviews can effectively fill a gap in knowledge about a particular topic that other methods such as questionnaires are unable to bridge efficaciously and can provide a range of views on a subject rather than genuinely representative statements (Kvale, 2007). Once questionnaires were sent out, interviews were organised to take place before, during or after scheduled professional events which we were both attending. This was possible for seven

authors. In two cases, I visited the hometown of the textbook authors on my way back from other educational events.

At the outset of the interview, participants were given an information sheet and consent form to read (Appendix A). This outlined the subject and scope of the research and my contact details. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions prior to a request for written consent for their data to be included in this study (BERA, 2018). While consent was being obtained, I reviewed the questionnaire responses prior to the start of the interview. Participants were asked if they wished to provide a pseudonym for the purpose of anonymisation, or whether they were happy for me to create one. Two participants created their own pseudonym and another asked that no identifying contextual information would be included in the write-up. This stance mirrored my intended approach. Audio-recording of interviews were made and transcribed verbatim. Participants were informed that they could withdraw their consent at any time, up until the commencement of data analysis (Flick, 2014). Once transcribed, participants could review and edit the interview texts if it was felt that they did not accurately represent their views.

In line with constructivist-interpretive thinking, I resisted claims that I had discovered the *truth*, because interviews share the opinions, views and beliefs of the participant, based on their intentionality or ‘unique peculiarity of experiences’ (Husserl, 1969, p.243). Thus, when facilitating discussion during the interview, I provided authors with the opportunity to talk about the different aspects of intentionality concerning ‘interaction between subject and object in relation to background, content, act and horizon’ (Howell, 2013, p.57). I take *background* to refer to the context of the study; the production of textbooks as a consequence of curriculum review and A level subject content change. The textbook is the key educational *object* or curriculum artefact being constructed (*intentional act*), the author is the *subject* and *horizon* refers to the focus of the interview; the selection and recontextualisation of subject content.

*Experts have technical process oriented and interpretive knowledge referring to their specific professional sphere of activity. Thus, expert knowledge does not only consist of systematized and reflexively accessible specialist knowledge, but it has the characteristic of practical knowledge.*

(Bogner and Menz, 2009 cited in Flick, 2014, p.228)

Interviewing experts is suited to following a semi-structured schedule (Appendix C) covering a range of key ideas related to the research questions, process knowledge (intentional act of writing a textbook), context knowledge (actions, events and routines) and interpretive knowledge (viewpoint and interpretations) (Bogner and Menz, 2009). Although, there was some degree of predetermination, the semi-structured form allowed interviews to ‘unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important’ (Longhurst, 2003, p.117) with ‘flexibility in the way issues are addressed’ (Dunn, 2000, p.52). The interview schedule included follow-up prompts to remind the author about something they said and probes for a further explanation (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Interview questions were designed to be open-ended and space was given to allow participants to respond fully before moving on. While listening carefully, I paid particular attention when the direction of the conversation shifted, as participants shared and developed particular areas of interest, which could initially be construed as being ‘off-topic’ yet revealed relevant and rich data. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview prevented me from being ‘prescriptive in predetermining what participants [could] talk or write about’ (Hopwood, 2009, p. 189) and encouraged participants in the discussion of a wide range of aspects of A level textbook construction, while attempting ‘constant transactional calibration’ (Hopwood, 2009, p.189) to confirm intended meanings.

Interviews are a common method used in geography education research. When interviewing teachers about knowledge construction and production in geography classrooms, Deen (2015) notes how the short length of interviews (between 10-15 minutes) can limit the amount of data collected. However, long interviews can become problematic as participants tire of talking and answering questions (Kvale, 2007). During interview, the opportunity was taken to ask the participants follow-up questions about their responses to the written questionnaire. All participants were asked to justify their choice of significant places, as it was felt that an opportunity to speak about significant places rather than provide a written response would reveal richer data. As discussed in Section 3.7.3, Q-sort was carried out at the end of the interview so as not to influence

responses to the interview questions. For all participants, the Q-sort provided stimulus material to add specificity, range and depth to the conversation about the concept of place.

Transcription was completed fairly quickly after each interview, while the conversations were fresh in my mind. I did not want a professional to complete the transcriptions as I wanted to allow immersion in the data (Smith *et al.*, 2009). This allowed me to reflect on the way questions were asked and responses provided in order to inform my future interviewer behaviour. Without a standard for transcription (Flick, 2014), the literature was consulted for guidance about how to transcribe audio recordings (Flick, 2014; Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Braun and Clarke, 2013). Some protocols such as line numbering and using a new line for a new turn of talk were followed. However, very precise conventions or rules were not followed because as Flick (2014, p.395) suggests ‘concern (sometimes excessive) with exactness should not predominate’. Once complete, a copy of the transcript was emailed to participants for review and an opportunity for the right-to-reply. This was a useful strategy, where the accuracy of any difficult-to-hear words could be clarified and participants could reflect and respond on the interview experience. Of the nine authors, only one author asked to edit transcript content, this was to further anonymise their identity and alter an unintended meaning about a fellow educator. This email exchange served as a valuable reminder of my need to address issues of sensitivity and anonymisation during the writing-up process. While writing each chapter, I was careful to avoid using identifying characteristics of authors. This was important, due to the small population of A level geography textbook authors from which the participants have been sampled.

### **3.7.3 *Q methodology***

A cluster analysis of a 25-statement concourse about place, known as Q methodology (Stephenson, 1953), was used in order to compare the subjective viewpoints of participants and potentially generate an emergent explanatory theory as to why people have certain viewpoints (Watts and Stenner, 2012). Although the small sample in my study makes this outcome unlikely. Q methodology was developed by the physicist Stephenson (1935), as an adaptation of Spearman’s method of factor analysis (Watts and Stenner, 2012), with the

purpose of capturing subjectivity. Subjectivity is understood as ‘the sum of behavioural activity that constitutes a person’s current viewpoint or point of view’ (Watts and Stenner, 2012, p.44) or people’s ‘relative subjective views on a question that is of interest’ (Wright, 2013, p.154).

In my research, Q methodology was used to explore the shared viewpoints held by textbook author about place (Stainton Rogers, 1995). The first step in this process was to identify a concourse or long-list of statements about place. These statements were adapted from a collection or Q set of 54 statements constructed by a ‘well-informed’ (Webler, *et al.*, 2009, p.6) group of researchers and teachers collaborating on an action-research geography project (Wood and Rawlings Smith, 2017). Drawing on the initial concourse and the formal A level subject content (DfE, 2014a), a Q set of 34 statements was created for a pilot Q-sort task with the aim of encompassing a wide range of views about place according to psychological significance (Wright, 2013; Burt and Stephenson, 1939). Using a scientific focus on the subjective meant that the majority viewpoint of the concept of place could be identified. This is a more useful tool than say a Likert scale for conducting research in the constructionist tradition (Stenner, 2008), because Q methodology is a self-referential forced-choice frequency distribution (Webler *et al.*, 2009). In other words, participants are simultaneously forced ‘to make a value judgment of one statement over another’ (Wright, 2013, p.155) rather than independently ranking individual statements on an ordinal scale.

The Q-sort was analysed using correlation and inverted factor analysis to reveal patterns of consensus and compromise between participants. Q was selected to emphasise its difference to R method techniques such as Pearson product moment coefficient (Webler *et al.*, 2009) and relates to what Stephenson (1935) called quansal units (QUANtification of SALiency), which demarcate the categories used in the Q-sort grid. Q is therefore both a quantitative and qualitative method, able to ‘give structure to the analysis of qualitative data’ (Wright, 2013, p.153). Stainton Rogers (1995) suggests that Q methodology is most effective with between 40 and 60 individuals. However, Watts and Stenner (2005, p.79) suggest that ‘large numbers of participants are not required’, that ‘highly effective Q studies can be carried out with far fewer participants’. Consequently, Q benefits

my research as it contrasts with the qualitative methods and helps me to understand the research focus from a different view.

The Q researcher community is relatively small, but growing in size and spreading further from its origins in the discipline of psychology practised in the USA and UK (Watts and Stenner, 2012). Although Q methodology has not been used widely in geography education research, its use is established in geography research focused on human geography (Eden *et al.*, 2005), rural studies (Duenckmann, 2010), land use change (Grecchi *et al.*, 2014) and geocognition (Petcovic *et al.*, 2014). This study will make a methodological contribution to the literature by adding to the body of work using Q methodology to derive rich data from small samples. It can potentially be used to inform teachers about the relative importance of particular aspects of subject knowledge at times of uncertainty and curriculum change; adding to the debate on the importance of continued subject-specific professional development for teachers. Using Q methodology is beneficial because it exposes ‘social perspectives that exist’ (Webler *et al.*, 2009, p.36); offers ‘some degree of objectivity through statistical analysis’ (Wright, 2013, p.161); is not overly time-consuming in comparison to transcribing and analysing interview data and can ‘help individuals understand their own thinking’ (Webler *et al.*, 2009, p.36). The latter was particularly useful to me as it allowed participants an extra opportunity to vocalise their opinions about different aspects of place, in addition to issues raised in the main interview.

Table 14 The 25 Q-sort statements

1 The media represents places in different ways	13 Place is influenced by climate
2 History shapes the character of places	14 People shape the character of places
3 How you feel affects your view of places	15 Physical geography affects place
4 Many processes create a place	16 Places are unique and distinctive
5 Capital, ideas & decisions flow between places	17 Places can be virtual
6 People experience places in different ways	18 Places follow distinct pattern
7 Place exists at a range of scales	19 Places are constantly changing
8 People, goods and resources flow between places	20 A place is influenced by its location
9 Places have no boundaries	21 The function of places change
10 The government influence how places change	22 Economic activity shapes places
11 Some places are public, others private	23 There is inequality within places
12 Places are interconnected	24 All places can be stereotyped
	25 A place has an address

The Q-sort was piloted with a Q set of 34 statements. Authors were unfamiliar with the Q-sort grid format and the task was time-consuming and frustrating due to the large number of cards to be ordered. Sorting the last handful of statements appeared more rushed and unfocused than the first few. Furthermore, once the most and least important statements were ordered, participants were less inclined to sort the rest, therefore, the ranking of middle-range statements was less reliable. Having previously used diamond-shaped ranking tasks in school geography with nine statements, I changed the format of the forced-choice frequency distribution from a ‘house standard’ (Watts and Stenner, 2012, p.17) grid with 34 statements to a diamond-shaped grid with 25 statements (Figure 16, Table 14). This matrix design was more intuitive and with less statements was more manageable.

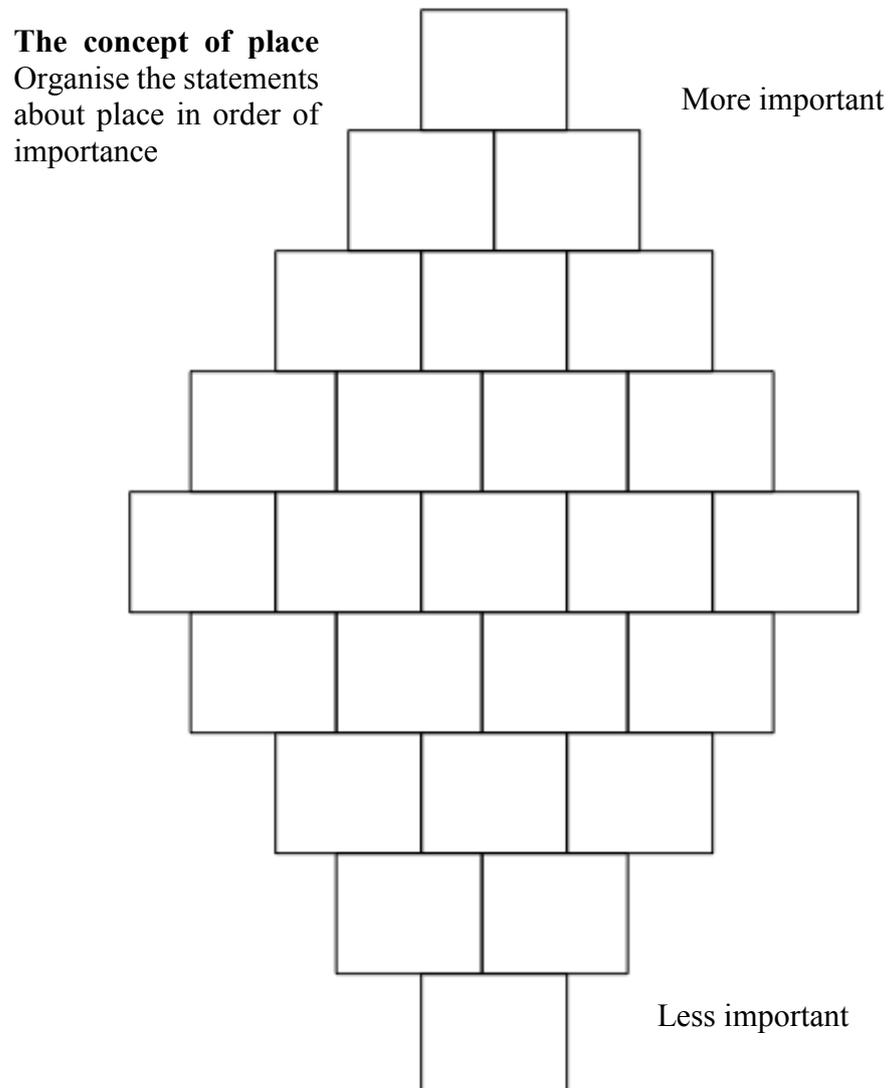


Figure 16 Diamond-25 Q-sort grid with 25 statement positions

A reduction in the number of statements was wise for practical and pragmatic reasons. Font size 14 could be used for the text and the scaffold grid could fit onto a piece of A4 paper, making the task more user friendly. In designing the new Q-sort grid, it was important to maintain a quasi-normal distribution pattern (Table 15) ranging from two extremes ranking positions representing ‘most important’ (+4) place statement at the top, a central position shared by five statements (0) and ‘least important’ (-4) at the bottom.

Table 15 Q-sort distribution for the 25 statements

	Least important statements				Neutral	Most important statements			
Value	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Frequency	1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	1

When reducing the number of statements from 54 to 34 and finally to 25, priority was given to those statements closely linked to the ‘Changing Places’ A Level geography subject content (DfE, 2014a). The smaller Q set allowed swift completion of the sorting exercise (ten minutes or so) and participants remained focused and enthusiastic while discussing the order of their statements. These narratives were audio recorded and transcribed in the same manner as the interviews. A photograph of the final Q set distribution was taken for analysis. The Q set statements worked as stimulus material, allowing ideas which had not surfaced during the interview to develop around the nature, pattern and function of place and the interconnections and flows between places.

The freeware Ken-Q Data (version 1.0.1) was used to visualise the Q-sort statements (Figure 17) and a Q methodological factor analysis was performed using Ken-Q Analysis<sup>8</sup> (Banasick, 2017) to see whether there was a similarity or difference of opinion about place between the authors (Watts and Stenner, 2012). In order to prepare the data for analysis, they were inputted into a template Microsoft Excel file, downloaded from the Ken-Q Analysis web application. The template usefully included a Lipset example for the sorts and statements to guide

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<sup>8</sup> Ken-Q Analysis is a desktop web application for Q Methodology v1.1 developed by Shawn Banasick at Kobe College, Japan.

the process. Once completed, the Q-sort file was uploaded to the Ken-Q Analysis web application for factor analysis. Although Ken-Q Analysis was used in this research, there are a number of alternative programmes such as PQ Method (Schmolck, 2002) which are also easy to use and allow factor extraction, rotation and estimation to take place (Watts and Stenner, 2005). Only factors assigned to eigenvalues greater than 0.5 were deemed to be important and those over 1.0 as significant, although Watts and Stenner (2005, p.81) note that this is a somewhat 'arbitrary criterion'. Following advice from Webler *et al.* (2009), four criteria – those of simplicity, clarity, distinctness and stability were also used to judge the most important factors from the analysis to explain the variance in viewpoints. The factor analysis also highlighted statements which explained the variance in viewpoints. This was combined with Watts and Stenner's (2005, p.82) suggestion to begin Q set analysis at the two 'poles' which seemed quite intuitive. The data could then highlight whether authors had similar or different views about place and the sophistication of their understanding of place. Figure 17 highlights six statements which at a 95 per cent interval are distinguishing (marked with an asterisk) and two at a 99 per cent interval (marked with two asterisks). Each group of individuals identified in the analysis have similar views and are identified by these particular distinguishing statements.

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
A place has an address	Places can be virtual	A place is influenced by its location	The government influence how places change	Place exists at a range of scales	History shapes the character of places	People experience places in different ways	Places are interconnected	**► Places are unique and distinctive
	Places have no boundaries	**◄ Place is influenced by climate	**► Some places are public, others private	*► Capital, ideas & decisions flow between places	**◄ Places are constantly changing	The media represents places in different ways	People shape the character of places	
		Places follow distinct pattern	**◄ Many processes create a place	Physical geography affects place	Economic activity shapes places	There is inequality within places		
			People, goods and resources flow between places	The function of places change	**► All places can be stereotyped			
				How you feel affects your view of places				

**Legend**

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \*\* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- z-Score for the statement is higher than in all the other factors
- ◄ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all the other factors

Figure 17 The output from the Ken-Q Analysis

The final sections of this chapter focus on data analysis, criteria for evaluating research, my ethical stance and the pilot study (Section 3.8 to 3.10).

### 3.8 Reflexive thematic analysis

Data analysis occurred concurrently with data collection, not at the conclusion of the data collection phase. Once interviews were transcribed, thematic analysis (TA) was used for data analysis due to its theoretically flexible approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013), meaning it can be used within a range of suitable methodologies, including the predominantly qualitative approach of my case study research. Clarke *et al.* (2019) identify three approaches (coding reliability, codebook and reflexive approaches) commonly taken in TA. The reflexive approach is used in this study as it is ‘most useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within textual data’ (Guest *et al.*, 2012, p.11). Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) define TA as ‘a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail’.

TA, as a named approach, was first developed by Holton, a physicist and historian of science in the 1970s (Clarke *et al.*, 2019, p.843). Although, in later work, Clarke *et al.* (2019) acknowledge that TA has much earlier use by musicologists and sociologists in the 1930s and 1940s. In 2006, Braun and Clarke proposed TA as a distinctive method for data analysis, even though it has been informally used in qualitative studies for over 80 years. Clarke (2018) evidences the increasing popularity of TA by the fact that their seminal paper (Braun and Clarke, 2006) has been cited in 47,102 papers (according to Google Scholar, 1 December 2018). Some scholars have used TA, content analysis and thematic content analysis interchangeably. However, Clarke *et al.* (2019, p.843) ask that researchers are more precise in their use of such terms, as they observe that TA is ‘poorly demarcated’ in the literature (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.77). Henceforth, I will refer to my data analysis as reflexive TA. This is because my understanding of the concept of a theme aligns with Braun and Clarke’s (2006, p.82) conception that a theme ‘captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set’.

As reflexive TA requires a significant amount of researcher judgement, it is important to maintain rigour in the analytic process, while also retaining ‘some flexibility’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82). As I started my study as a fairly

inexperienced researcher, I closely followed the six-stage analytic process of reflexive TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.87; Table 16). I was appreciative that reflexive TA should not be viewed as a linear model where progress is made stage by stage, but rather as a messy, recursive process (Braun and Clarke, 2013), using reflexive TA in a knowing, thoughtful way (Braun *et al.*, 2019).

Table 16 Six stages of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.87)

Process of data analysis at each stage
<b>Stage 1.</b> Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
<b>Stage 2.</b> Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
<b>Stage 3.</b> Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
<b>Stage 4.</b> Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
<b>Stage 5.</b> Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
<b>Stage 6.</b> Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Although time consuming, reading and re-reading the interview transcripts helped me to become immersed in the data. Following an iterative reading of the transcripts and by making detailed initial notes, I then started to generate codes and candidate themes (Appendix E). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), themes can either be semantic or latent, the former focusing on explicit meanings, the latter identifying the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations. They suggest moving away from largely descriptive TA towards more conceptually-informed TA as topics are further researched. However, in the context of under-researched areas of geography education, a descriptive TA can produce ‘a rich overall description’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.83) of the research area, fill a gap in the literature and be used as a starting point for future research.

Initial analysis was carried out on paper copies of the transcript, with line-by-line analysis and the recording of initial codes, comments and potential themes in the margins (Figure 18). Related codes were clustered, developing an initial thematic structure with broader overarching themes, into which all of the useful material could be organised. Transparency was possible as data analysis followed the same format. It was possible to trace data from early notes and codes on transcripts via a spreadsheet for codes (Appendix E), themes and quotes (Figure 18 to 20) to the final written thesis. The five research questions, revised during data analysis, align with the most-prevalent, overarching themes identified across the data set. Themes were identified at three levels with five overarching or macro-level themes and no more than three sub or meso-level and three micro-level themes under each overarching theme (so as to only report the most relevant data). Although my inductive approach to TA is data-driven, it is important to note that ‘researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.84). Consequently, there is dynamism in reflexive TA, where candidate themes are ‘in process’, until there is satisfaction that the reworked thematic mapping ‘adequately capture the contours of the coded data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.91).

<p>Enjoy writing about Sendai – FT/Economist <u>lovely crystal clear visualisation</u> of a pigment paint that got washed away and disrupted everything – students <u>like ownership over tiny little facts</u> that are really interesting – interesting to author as in the midst of the story of enormous magnitude the story drills down to a little paint pigment (<u>Diving for Pearls</u>).</p> <p>Don’t like dry newspaper reports and just rewritten it – not adding value – comparing own values with others</p> <p>Important to draw out central concepts or issues of scale. Need a reason to use a textbook and not just the original source.</p> <p>Not just about using simpler language. Need to <u>use language that matters</u> (subject content that matters – potential theme?)</p>	<p>157 absolutely huge, 300 billion or whatever.  158 enjoyed writing about because the reports  159 have these lovely clear examples of a pig  160 factory in Japan that got washed away by  161 and I thought that was a lovely crystal cle  162 liked those tiny little facts, ownership ove  163 I suppose that makes that interesting to m  164 enormous magnitude scale event, the stor  165 washed away and what the implications o  166  167 <b>15.41 Do you try to do that in all the thing</b>  168 Yes, I think I do. I always try to find som  169 But also, I am probably wondering off co  170 books, is where they have clearly just tak  171 rewritten it and it is not really adding any  172 more stuff that happened. This happened,  173 always nice to add value in a textbook by  174 concepts or draws out issues of scale and  175 want to do if I was, is to add value to stud  176 Where there is a reason why you have use  177 original source. It is not just because you  178 have used language that matters. So that v  179  180 <b>16.52 So do you see there being a value to</b>  181</p>
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Figure 18 Transcription extract showing initial noting and initial codes

Themes	Linda	Olly	Rebus	Jem	Ash	Vic
<b>Add value</b>						
Quality and variety of activities				2		2
Create framework for support	1	1	1	3	2	1
Curiosity to 'hook' students						2
Content relevant to studs			2	2		2
Aspirational content	1	2	1		2	2
Coherent content, write with 1 voice			1	1	3	
Apply wider purpose of education			2	2	2	2
Bring something alive in mind				2		2
Providing teachers with confidence				1		
Good use of case studies	1			1	3	2
<b>A balancing act with subject content</b>						
- creativity and logicity like a jigsaw			2			
- types of knowledge	1	2	1	2	3	1
- accessibility/ complexity	1	2		3	2	1
- voices/identities	2	3		1		1
- balance & check data/ triangulating	1	1		2	2	
- Depth & breadth, what to leave in and take out		1	1	1		
- paradigm tension- human/ physical	1	3	1	1	2	

Figure 19 A cross comparison of code frequency and initial themes

Use language that matters	02-299-300	Trying to explain in student-friendly language, that you are writing for a range of abilities at A Level but not simplifying it too much
	05-300	Mick Witherick's books are lovely as well, he is such a good writer and he just uses language well.
	05-176-8	Where there is a reason why you have used a textbook rather than going back to the original source. It is not just because you have used simpler language, it is because you have used language that matters.
	08-719-25	ALCAB could have helped us, if only ALCAB had asked a few of us that had been around for a bit, gone to the three awarding bodies and say give me one person and the ALCAB chairman had just got us along to one of the sessions so we could have talked to them and saying could you just alter the language here and you would find that colleagues would embrace this, much more readily, but anyway, that was not to be.

Figure 20 Quotes related to themes, with participant/line reference

The fourth and fifth stage of TA (described in Table 16) were challenging, as candidate themes were revised and reorganised to identify patterns across the dataset in a process of integrative cross-analysis. This stage involved mapping themes and fitting them together across multiple participants to explore the way in which ideas converged or diverged or supported and conflicted with each other. During this stage, some themes were disregarded and others combined where appropriate and brought to prominence if they seemed to be important. At this point in my research, I revised my conceptual framework and research questions. Having disregarding a number of codes about the social aspect of accumulating and disseminating knowledge, I added the fifth research question 'Who in the community of practice inspires and supports authors?'. This was a pivotal moment

in my research as it centralised the concept of professional capital in my conceptual framework and helped to structure my research findings and discussion. Due to data from the questionnaire and Q-sort being narrowly focused on specific aspects of place, these were added to the findings and discussions where relevant.

### **3.9 Criteria for evaluating research**

*Unfortunately, there are no absolute criteria for judging whether a piece of qualitative research is any good.*

(Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.278)

Reliability and validity are frequently used in quantitative research to evaluate quality. Reliability is a measure of generating the same results if a study was repeated, again problematic when ‘the researcher inevitably influences the research process and the knowledge produced’ (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.279). Validity is a measure of whether a piece of research captures ‘reality’, but the multiple realities of a relativist ontology is problematic in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p.47). Due to the idiographic nature of this research and necessarily small sample size, to allow in-depth data analysis, Yardley (2000, p.218) suggests that ‘qualitative researchers are often criticised by quantitative researchers for failing to employ a representative sample, to develop reliable measures, or to yield objective findings or replicable outcomes’. Further criticisms are that subjective idiographic methods are unsystematic, ungeneralizable, overly descriptive, biased and therefore of limited value (Schaefer, 1953; Harvey, 1969). These claims are made on grounds of quantitative quality criteria which are often used for quality control in objective and quantitative research. Instead of using the ubiquitous concepts of validity and reliability, qualitative researchers now evaluate the quality of their research with different criteria (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Yardley’s (2000, p.219) four characteristics of good qualitative research: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance (Table 17) is one such alternative, borrowed from the field of qualitative health psychology.

Table 17 Essential qualities of good research (adapted from Yardley, 2000)

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Examples of the form each characteristic can take</b>
Sensitivity to context	Theoretical, relevant literature, empirical data, socio-cultural setting, participants' perspectives, ethical issues
Commitment and rigour	In-depth engagement with topic, methodological competence/skill, thorough data collection, depth/breadth of analysis
Transparency and coherence	Clarity and power of description/argument, transparent methods and data presentation, fit between theory and method - reflexivity
Impact and importance	Theoretical (enriching understanding), socio-cultural, practical (for community, institutions, policy makers)

The first of Yardley's (2000) essential qualities of good research, sensitivity to context was met by providing a detailed context for the study and researcher positionality, as well as sensitivity to the different perspectives provided by the authors. Q methodology brought out differences in authors' subjective understandings of place and this informed the data analysis more broadly. Rigour refers to the completeness of the data collection and analysis, and commitment 'encompasses prolonged engagement with the topic' (Yardley, 2000, p.221). My commitment and rigour evidenced by my immersion in geography education research over the last five years: as research student, geography education consultant and writer. My preoccupation in methods and data a particular feature of this last year, when I have focused on data analysis and writing up as a focused activity to allow completeness of the research findings and discussion. Adding the fifth research question (see Section 3.2.3 for details) reinforced this process. Further, the triangulation of questionnaire, Q-sort and interview data strengthened my understanding of the research topic, seeing the topic from different viewpoints. Transparency and coherence or 'clarity and cogency' (Yardley, 2000, p.222) were achieved by ensuring a close fit between the research questions, philosophical perspective and methods. Excerpts of the data are presented to support the description of the data collection process and narratives are provided in Appendix D, so that the reader can get a sense of what was said in the interviews. Further, my positionality is outlined in the Preface and Section 3.4. This provides transparency about my experience and motivations for carrying out

this research. Section 9.4 sets out the limitations of this study. The impact and utility of my research has driven my decisions to disseminate my work and get involved in associated projects during my PhD journey. I am most proud of the *Changing Places* A level book (Rawlings Smith *et al.*, 2016), written to bridge the gap between endorsed A level textbooks and disciplinary texts, this and other public outputs are listed in Appendix H. To date, I have prioritised the dissemination of my research to geography teachers and geography education researchers. Once my PhD is submitted, my aim is to disseminate aspects of my research more widely within the discipline of education.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

This research was conducted in line with the ethical rules for research set out in British Educational Research Association's (BERA, 2018) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* and the University of Leicester's (2018) ethical policy.

#### **3.10.1 Introduction to Ethics**

Ethical research requires practitioners to 'behave with integrity' and 'act in accordance with notions of right and wrong...because this is the right thing to do' (Hay, 2016 p.30). My intention is to make ethically acceptable decisions, drawing on a universalist stance where 'infractions of ethical principles are wrong in a moral sense and are damaging to social research' (Bryman, 2012, p.133). This section outlines the high standard of ethical practice I strived for and the steps taken to negotiate ethical and safeguarding issues while carrying out research with participants within and beyond the school classroom. Ethical approval for this research was granted by a University Ethics Committee.

#### **3.10.2 Deontological ethical philosophy**

This study is underpinned by a deontological ethical philosophy such that no harm occurs to participants, voluntary-informed consent is obtained and there is no invasion of privacy or deception involved (BERA, 2018). Although physical harm to participants is unlikely during this research, mild psychological harm is a possibility as it involves direct interaction with participants during face-to-face semi-structured interviews. This is a particular concern for the school-aged participants who could be sensitive to the presence of the researcher (an unfamiliar

adult or ‘outsider’) in the classroom intent on carrying out interviews about place, a topic they may not feel confident talking about.

Operating within an ethic of respect (BERA, 2018) a number of steps were taken to mitigate unintentional harm. These included piloting the written survey and interview with adults first; putting participants at ease by introducing the research, asking easy opening interview questions, using active listening and being empathetic (Kvale, 2007); avoiding poorly-phrased, leading or disrespectful questions and keeping student interviews short so as not to be too intrusive or keep students away from their lessons for too long. Ethical dilemmas became easier to deal with after the pilot study when student participants were removed from the study. Data collected from textbook authors took place in public spaces, such as coffee shops, to ‘put participants at their ease’ and reduce the sense of intrusion that could otherwise be felt (BERA, 2018, p.19).

To obtain informed consent, information sheets and consent forms (Appendix A) were provided to participants ahead of the scheduled interview to allow them time to read and understand the research process, their role in the research and why their participation was necessary (BERA, 2018). Voluntary informed consent ensures that participants were made fully aware of their involvement and had the opportunity to refuse to participate or withdraw participation during the data collection stage (Flick, 2014). Approval was also sought from participants for the interviews to be audio-recorded, transcribed and used in my research. Where research occurred with school students or teachers on school grounds, informed consent was sought from the Headteacher (or their proxy) on grounds of openness and full disclosure. This helped secure protected ‘free’ periods for teachers, ensuring that planned interviews could go ahead as scheduled. while carrying out research with school students any decisions were made in the best interest of the participants, thus complying with Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1990). For the pilot, consent was sought from the school students (and their guardians) and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were carried out by my university in support of statutory safeguarding guidance, issued under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (DfE, 2015). Concern for students’ welfare stayed central to the ethical decision-making process.

To prevent the invasion of privacy, care was taken to protect the identity and records of participants (confidentiality and anonymity). Identifier codes were used on data files and transcripts rather than actual participant's names to maintain confidentiality. Anonymity was achieved with the use of pseudonyms and the avoidance of using institutions' names or personal identifiers. Certain identifiable comments which could be traced to individuals were not included in the thesis. Requesting accuracy checks of transcribed data by the participants helped to cross-check my interpretation of the interviews to achieve validation through triangulation (Cohen *et al.*, 2011; Braun and Clarke, 2013). Whyte (1993) argues that respondent validation of interview transcripts can be problematic and questions their practicality as participants may change their mind, withdraw comments or alter the meaning of phrases after reading interview conversations as text. These issues were kept in mind. However, only one participant asked for a minor edit as they felt that a particular comment misrepresented their intended meaning and made their identity quite visible.

In terms of data protection, printed data was stored securely, following the principles of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR, 2018) and the UK's Data Protection Act (2018). Data was stored in locked cabinets and electronic data was encrypted and stored in password-protected files. Following the successful completion of the research, the electronic data will be deleted and hard data shredded (UOL, 2016; BERA, 2018). The GDPR superseded the UK Data Protection Act (1998) in May 2018. Prior to the new regulation coming into force and in compliance with BERA (2018, p.7) Guideline 4 to 'keep up to date with changes in data use regulations and advice', I checked that my data storage and use was compliant with new regulations (UOL, 2018).

According to the *Research Code of Conduct* for the University of Leicester (UOL, 2016, p.4) a researcher 'must maintain the highest standards of integrity in the conduct of research, guided by the values of honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect, and academic freedom'. To this end, it was good practice to conduct my research within an ethical framework, using transparent methods and continuous reflexivity (see Section 3.8) on the research process, ensuring research integrity and quality control (Yardley, 2000). My research integrity was put to the test during the pilot, which will now be discussed.

### **3.11 Pilot Study**

After developing appropriate research methods and gaining ethical approval (BERA, 2018), a pilot study was completed in May/June 2015. My reflections on the pilot study helped develop my questionnaire, interview schedule and Q-sort design. Listening and transcribing the pilot audio recordings informed my interview technique and started me thinking about data analysis. Each method is discussed in turn, starting with the questionnaire.

The pilot involved data collection from students, teachers and an author, as my initial study was designed to understand the process of textbook production from the view of authors and how textbook content is use by teachers and students. Data was collected from three A level Geography students from an educational institution in the West Midlands. Questionnaires were sent electronically ahead of face-to-face meetings. Having used questionnaires in previous unpublished research, I was confident with this method. After the pilot, I reviewed and revised the questionnaire design (Section 3.7.1 and Appendix B). Questions where alternative interpretations had been given in the pilot were reworded to garner more relevant responses and I replaced a vague question, providing more clarity for the participant.

Interviews lasted for approximately 15 minutes and took place during the school lunch break. The geography classroom was the most common location for interviews and was a quiet environment which allowed clear audio to be recorded. The geography teacher stayed in the room to satisfy school safeguarding rules and was able to work quietly. Teachers were asked when would be a best time for an interview. Two teachers agreed to be interviewed at school during their free periods in the summer term (2016) when Year 11-13 groups were on examination leave and workload was reduced. The third teacher elected to meet in a quiet coffee shop for a more relaxed environment and less time pressure. In terms of interview location, the pilot taught me to select public locations with low levels of background noise, to provide drinks and to tell participants ahead of time about the focus of the interview as this provided some thinking time for the participants. A Dictaphone successfully captured the interviews. However, I was unsure when it was actually recording and I struggled to transfer large file sizes, resulting in an

alternative recording device being used for subsequent interviews. I tested the VoiceRecorder app on my iPhone which showed a virtual tape spinning during recording and files were easily uploaded for secure digital storage. Following each interview, time was allowed for reflection and refinement. My technique improved as I learnt to actively listen to participants, maintain a non-judgemental attitude, use neutral phrasing, eschew the use of leading questions and avoid cutting across the interviewee to ask subsequent questions (Kvale, 2007). The pilot interview schedule was too detailed, simplifying it focused my attention on the key research elements. During subsequent interviews it was easier to probe for more information on these key elements. It was also important to refer back to questionnaire responses throughout the interview, to triangulate data from both methods.

Having employed Q-sort in previous research (Wood and Rawlings Smith, 2017), the pilot for this study was a process of refinement. I provided a grid in which to place the Q set statements (Figure 16) and used a fairly large text font so statements were easy to read and still fit on an A4 piece of paper. I learnt to photograph the final statement arrangement, rather than ask participants to glue these down to avoid wasting time. The pilot also taught me to conduct the main interview prior to the Q-sort, so stimulus material did not drive the main interview.

Once I had edited the questionnaire, interview schedule and Q-sort scaffold and was confident with the revised research methods, data collection continued. Interview dates with authors were agreed at mutually agreeable times, often during or after geography education events we were attending. By April 2017, and as a result of collecting a rich dataset from textbook authors, I felt that the scope of my research (with authors, teachers and students) was too broad. Time would limit my ability to fully analyse data and write up a study with 27 participants. I resolved not to collect further data from students or analyse data previously obtained from teachers and students. Instead, I focused my research on the experiences and perspectives of textbook authors, as their voice is least represented in the literature.

A key discussion point in the pilot author interview was the importance of ALCAB as a driver of curriculum change. It therefore seemed sensible to carry out an additional interview with a member of ALCAB, to provide context on the

substantive core content of the Changing Places topic. This interview was not analysed in the same way as the nine author interviews, instead it was used to triangulate some of the authors' comments and provide a first-hand account of ALCAB's involvement in education policy development.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter started by setting out my study aims and research questions. My key aim being to address the gap in the literature concerning how authors recontextualise knowledge in A level Geography textbooks, from the viewpoint of author rather than reader. The chapter then described the epistemology and theoretical perspective which underpin my research. Aligned with an idiographic approach, my constructivist-interpretive research focuses on the individual. As the individuals of interest are authors of endorsed A Level Geography textbooks published in 2016, my case study research design is bounded by a specific phenomena rather than a spatial parameter which is more commonly used in educational research (Merriam, 1995). The methods I used included a questionnaire, Q-sort and semi-structured interview in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perspectives of textbook authors. Reflexive TA (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to provide a rich description of the qualitative data and a Q methodological factor analysis was performed to see any similarities or differences of opinion about place between the authors. Yardley's (2000) four characteristics of good qualitative research were used to evaluate my research and lessons learnt from the pilot study concluded the Research Design.

Drawing on the literature review and research design chapters, the next five chapters present the research findings and discussion, each chapter addressing a single research question.

## Part III

### Research Findings

Now that the literature has been reviewed and research methods set out, my focus turns to the research findings and discussion. This chapter begins with a reminder of the golden thread running through my research. The central position of the research questions in Figure 21 highlights their importance in structuring the rest of my thesis.

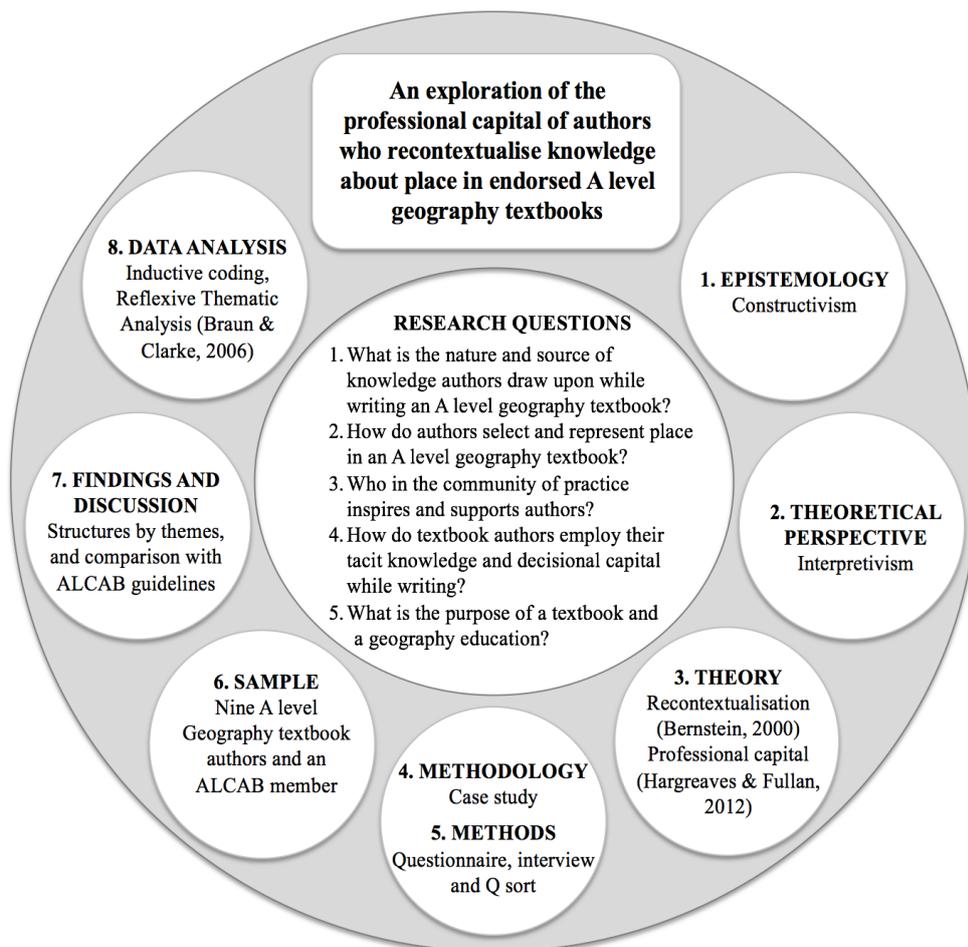


Figure 21 The golden thread running through my research

I initially analysed data one research question at a time. However, the four working research questions, which had guided my research early on, constrained my ability to incorporate a theme focused on influential others. Consequently, I put my research questions to one side and completed data analysis using the whole dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013). This step is encouraged by Flick (2014, p.148) who suggests that research questions should be reformulated so that certain aspects of the research are not 'left in the background or excluded'. Data from

interviews, questionnaires and Q-sort were analysed from an interpretative perspective. Interview transcripts were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis and Q-sorts analysed using Q factor analysis. The five revised overarching themes generated after data analysis were inclusive of more of the coded data, as follows:

- Know-what: the accumulation of subject knowledge and sources of knowledge which authors draw on and recontextualise.
- Know-where: the complex decision-making process which authors experience when selecting and representing places in an A level geography textbook.
- Know-who: the individuals, groups and communities who have inspired authors during their education and professional roles as geography educators.
- Know-how: the characteristics of author expertise and how this practical knowledge is used to overcome constraints when structuring subject content for inclusion in a textbook.
- Know-why: the purpose of a quality A level textbook and more broadly the purpose of a good geographical education.

Consequently, I reformulated my original research questions and added an additional one, third in the list, to encompass codes forming a coherent pattern around influential others and the social capital of authors, under the key theme 'know-who'. The five research questions which frame my research are as follows:

1. What is the nature and source of knowledge authors draw upon while writing an A level geography textbook?
2. How do authors select and represent place in an A level geography textbook?
3. Who in the community of practice inspires and supports authors?
4. How do textbook authors employ their tacit knowledge and decisional capital while writing?
5. What is the purpose of a textbook and a geography education?

To connect the data with my conceptual framework, the five overarching themes were integrated with the concepts of professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012) and the pedagogic device (Bernstein, 1990, 2000) as shown in Figure 22.

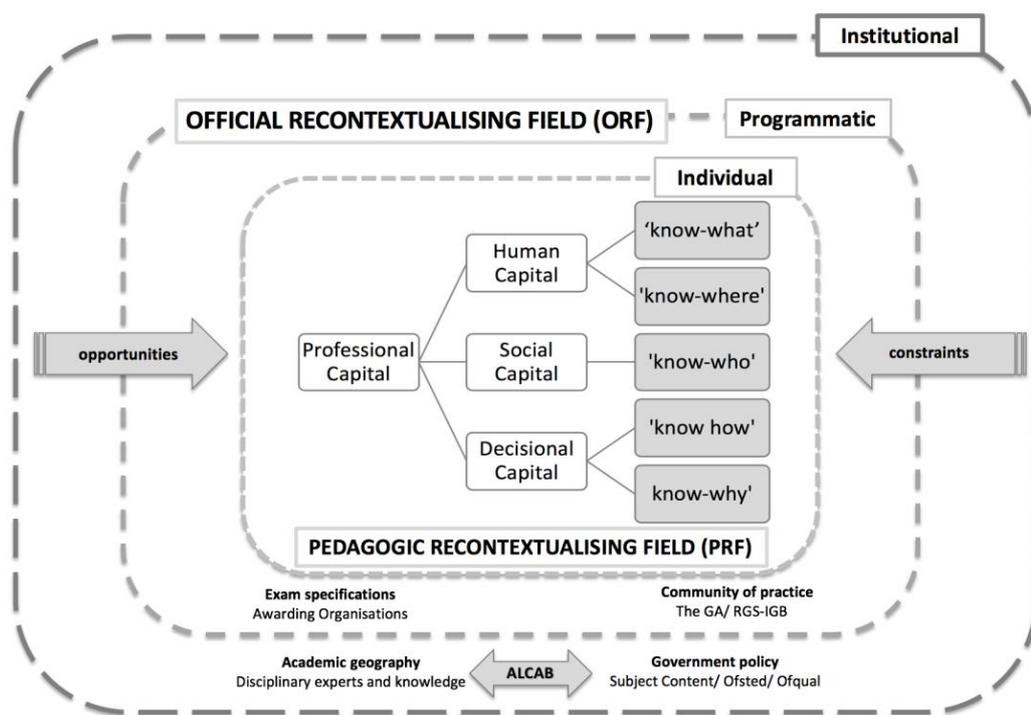


Figure 22 Overarching themes incorporated into the conceptual framework

My approach to the construction of a conceptual framework was initiated prior to data collection and again revised during data analysis. It was important that the final conceptual framework design was data-driven (Flick, 2014, p.137). I agree with Corbin and Strauss (2008) that data should not be inappropriately shoehorned into a conceptual framework in which it does not fit. After data analysis was completed, I revised earlier sections of my thesis to reflect the progression in my thinking, following a more recursive or ‘circular’ approach (Flick, 2014, p.139). Data from the questionnaire, Q-sort and endorsed A level Geography textbooks were introduced into the findings at the relevant points. Research findings are presented logically over the next five chapters, addressing each of the overarching themes in turn, followed by a discussion. Research findings are written with the aim of expressing key themes which relate to the conceptual framework, including aspects of professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012) and the recontextualisation of knowledge (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). At the end of each chapter, concluding remarks are used to draw each strand of the research together.

## 4 What is the nature and source of knowledge authors draw upon while writing an A level geography textbook?

The findings for this research question focus on the geography subject content included in an A level Geography textbook and are grouped under the overarching theme ‘know-what’. Data presented here were collected from questionnaires, interviews, Q-sorts and direct from the five 2016 A level Geography textbooks. Where data analysis refers directly to a textbook, I have maintained anonymity by not cross-referencing the publication with the author who participated in my study. Due to the timing of the interviews, which in most cases was prior to the publication of the textbooks, the possibility for authors to use their own writing as stimulus material was limited. Using the words of authors, taken directly from the interview transcripts, a narrative for the theme ‘know-what’, and the other four themes, are presented in Appendix D. These narratives provide the reader with an insight of the perspectives of the nine authors.

### 4.1 Introducing the overarching theme ‘know-what’

The findings for the overarching theme ‘know-what’ describe how authors accumulate subject knowledge and the sources of knowledge which authors draw from and transform for dissemination to students. Within the overarching theme ‘know-what’, three sub-themes were identified: ‘knowledge and understanding of subject content’, ‘sourcing knowledge’ and ‘valuing geographical perspectives’. Table 18 presents these themes.

Table 18 Themes identified under the overarching theme ‘know-what’

<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Micro-themes</b>
Knowledge and understanding of subject content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The nature and structure of subject content</li><li>• Stereotypes and binaries</li></ul>
Sourcing knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From lived experiences to vicarious representations</li><li>• Semantics and pitch of knowledge</li><li>• Data sourcing and verification</li></ul>
Valuing geographical perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place as process</li><li>• Experienced places and the geographical imagination</li></ul>

The first sub-theme deals with the nature and structure of knowledge and is concerned with how knowledge is understood. The second sub-theme focuses on the source, complexity and verification of knowledge and the final sub-theme incorporates ideas about divergent geographical perspectives.

## **4.2 Theme 1: Knowledge and understanding of subject content**

The first sub-theme ‘Knowledge and understanding of subject content’ has two micro-themes. The first is ‘The nature and structure of subject content’ which is strongly influenced by the way subject content is structured and presented in policy documents and examination specifications and is experienced by authors as an opportunity or constraint in the writing process. The second theme is ‘Binaries and stereotypes’ which are the unintended consequences of knowledge presented in an over-generalised or simplistic form. These themes are now discussed in turn.

### **4.2.1 *The nature and structure of subject content***

All the authors note that ALCAB guidance, specification content, the predetermined structure of textbooks and the endorsement process all constrain decisions they make about the subject content of textbooks. For example, while describing the nature of A level textbooks, Paul (line 344-51) accepts that endorsed textbooks are part of the current educational landscape:

*I am totally against endorsed textbooks and have been for years. I am not being hypocritical when I have contributed to it. There is no choice. If I were to write, if I were to approach a publisher, saying I would like to write a textbook that would not be specific to a particular exam board I would like to think would be good geography, they would not touch it. It's not going to sell and I think it is a very sad day when we have got down to this.*

With that said, authors tend not to dwell on these constraints as they have no power to change them and instead look for opportunities for their own agency in the writing process. Over the last decade, the structure and design of most textbooks have converged as they borrow good design from each other. The

headers used to identify subject content in the five 2016 endorsed A level Geography textbooks are presented in Table 19. Features such as key terms or ideas, tinted textboxes for case studies and review questions occur in all the books sampled, whereas, other features are only found in certain titles. A ‘skills focus’ is present in books published by Hodder (Skinner *et al.*, 2016; Raw *et al.*, 2016) and the ‘Books, music, and films on this topic’ header is only used in the Oxford University Press Edexcel book (Digby *et al.*, 2016).

Table 19 The structure of endorsed A level Geography textbooks

Hodder AQA	Oxford AQA	CUP AQA	Hodder OCR	OUP Edexcel
Convergent features				
Key terms		Key terms	Key idea	Key word
Tinted box – case studies	Tinted box – case studies		Tinted box – case studies	Tinted box – case studies
Key questions	Think about	Making connections		Synoptic themes
	Activities	Activity	Activities	On your own
Further reading	Stretch Yourself	Research point	Stretch and challenge	Background
Review questions	Now Practice...	Assess to progress	Review questions	Over to you
Question practice			Practice questions	Exam-style questions
Divergent features				
Skills focus	Did you know?	Investigate	Skills focus	Overview
Fieldwork opportunities		Thinking like a geographer		Books, music and films

Several authors mention reviewing previously published textbooks to gain insight about the nature and structure of subject content. Opinion is divided as to whether this is good practice. Five authors mention choosing not to read the work of others. For example, Jem does not want her work to be a repetition of previous textbooks, and Ron says that she would ‘not want to get information that somebody else had drawn from somebody else’, preferring instead to ‘find the things for myself’ (line 081-82). The remaining authors mention the benefits of reviewing fellow authors’ work. For example, Linda wants to see how the specification content had been interpreted and Rebus wants to review topics which she has not taught in school.

None of the authors talk about reviewing the structure of activities in preparation for creating new ones. Instead, they rely on their own experience and assessment expertise to develop these from scratch.

All of the authors in this study perceive the key driver guiding the process of case study and place selection to be specification content. Authors report being able to push the boundaries of specification content where there is flexibility or space to do so (discussed further in Section 4.3.1). Most authors suggest that the geographical school of thought used to structure examination specifications and geographical knowledge is a second important driver. Developing this idea, four of the authors discuss the set of assumptions which shape their way of viewing the world through the paradigms of positivism and social constructionism and how they apply this in their own writing. Sam and Vic stress the importance of exploring interactions between people and places and Paul perceives individual and shared meanings about place to be important. Ash goes further and explains how he chooses examples to illustrate water security within a people-environment interaction paradigm, by selecting places with ‘the greatest overlap between people and environment’ (line 60). In other words, risky and populous locations. Ash suggests that London is the best example of a case study for coastal flooding in the UK, because it is low-lying and flooding is likely to impact a significant proportion of the city’s ten million residents. Textbook content is therefore selected as a result of the set of assumptions implied in the specification content.

#### **4.2.2 *Stereotypes and binaries***

Stereotypes and binaries can unintentionally develop when limited information or small case studies present a partial view of a place. All the authors recall examples which jar in the mind and do not align with a good geographical education. Vic describes his shock at seeing a primitive representation of Kenyan culture in the form of a straw hut in a geography textbook. He explains how this image would leave a strong stereotype of a ‘backward’ people in the mind of the learner (Wright, 1985). All the authors know that unbalanced representations of particular groups of people and places should be avoided. They also know that a double page in a textbook is not enough space to accurately represent place. Yet, sometimes this is all the space they have to work with. Four authors discuss the importance of avoiding the single story of place. For example, Paul talks about

how the 9/11 terrorist attack ‘gave new meaning to New York’ (line 126) and Jem (line 470-3) raises a concern about ‘repeated stereotypes of certain groups of people’. She feels that ‘it is the responsibility of textbook authors to present the world in the words of the GA’s (2009) manifesto ‘From a Different View’. When asked how they avoid stereotypes (Questionnaire Qu. 8), authors suggest that challenging stereotypes was most important (Table 20) and could be achieved by providing nuanced representations from a range of sources and voices. This matches findings by Lidstone (1985) and Catling and Lee (2017).

Table 20 Themes for the ways authors avoid stereotypes and misconceptions

Themes			
Awareness-raising	Challenging stereotypes	A range of sources and voices	Nuanced representations
Authors			
Linda, Olly, Jem, Sam and Ron	Linda, Olly, Rebus, Ash, Vic and Paul	Linda, Jem, Ash, Vic, Sam and Paul	Olly, Rebus, Jem, Ash, Vic, Sam and Ron
Examples of practice			
Being aware of stereotypes, deal with issues head on and myth busting common misconceptions.	Think critically, question and challenge previous views, learning and assumptions.	Use a range of current, authentic and diverse data i.e. first-hand experience and formal data.	Avoid binaries or over-simplified categorisations and emphasise differences within and between places.

Six authors note how as an educator it is important to challenge stereotypes. Rebus links this to being critical with sources of data and peoples’ perspectives. Vic (line 492-3) uses the example of the controversial television documentary *Benefit Street*, which follows the lives of benefit claimants living on the same street and suggests that avoiding assumptions such as people on welfare lack motivation to find employment is key to developing a nuanced view of people and places. Generalisations should also be avoided. Authors suggest that specific, subject-based knowledge is preferable to generic concepts or ideas. In his questionnaire response to Question 8, Olly suggests that:

*I try to avoid the generic term ‘scientists’ when talking about something like climate change – instead using ‘climatologists’, so that students don’t just see generic titles or themes ascribed to people or places.*

Authors understand that in order to avoid generalisations, a great deal of research is required, this response, from Vic, highlights the point:

*I may not have been there, but my writing always takes me longer than most writers I know because I do research places fully, and try to use specific named places and people at all times*

Six of the nine authors stress the importance of drawing on a range of sources of information, providing detailed, relevant and contextual knowledge appropriate for A level. It is also important for authors to know the provenance of material and validate data. Linda is keen that a balance between qualitative and quantitative information is presented to students.

A final concern authors raise is the commonly used over-simplification that countries can be grouped into two categories, either more economically developed countries (MEDCs) or less economically developed countries (LEDCs). Ash (line 41) remembers how the ‘terrible’ MEDC/LEDC binary was once prolific in school and society, and caused significant misconceptions for students. He recalls being joyous at the arrival of the BRIC<sup>9</sup> and MINT<sup>10</sup> acronyms in economics and describes acting quickly to bring them into school geography lexicon. This more diverse way of viewing countries allows students to better see the complexity of the world. Authors felt this to be important because dangerous generalisations or over-simplistic divides still persist, often ingrained in the language of curriculum documents, yet they cause unnecessary othering (Said, 1978) where language such as ‘us’ and ‘them’ is used without thought.

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<sup>9</sup> BRIC referring to the newly advanced economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China

<sup>10</sup> MINT referring to the emerging economies of Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey.

### 4.3 Theme 2: Serendipity, luck and opportunism: sourcing knowledge

With time, authors accumulate a depth and breadth of knowledge which supports their writing. The source of this knowledge is diverse and individualised. All the authors talk of their own education and teaching experience as being significant, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. Authors also rely on shared and vicarious sources of knowledge. This theme focuses on the sources of geographical knowledge authors draw upon, as well as the recontextualisation of these knowledges to make them accessible to school students.

#### 4.3.1 *From lived experiences to vicarious representations*

When writing an A level geography textbook, authors draw on a number of knowledge sources, from their own experience to a wide range of vicarious representations. The sources of knowledge mentioned by authors in the questionnaires are presented in Table 21 and those mentioned during interview are presented in Table 22. Questionnaire responses suggest that authors draw on a range of knowledge sources including personal travel, photographs, maps, films, radio, music, research, other peoples' stories and professional magazines. A recurrent theme is a sense amongst authors that they make use of any, and all, available sources of knowledge. Linda describes this as 'gannet geography' (line 147), explaining that 'the sources of information I used definitely involves an element of serendipity, luck and opportunism in my approach' (line 009).

Table 21 Sources of knowledge as written in the questionnaires

Source of knowledge	Frequency
Travel/personal visits	9
Photographs/maps	7
Films/ radio/music	7
Research for teaching/writing i.e. online	7
Other peoples' stories	7
Reading professional magazines	7
Reading non-academic books	6
Reading academic books, papers and attending lectures	6
TV	6
News	5
Textbooks	3
lived experience	4
NGO material	2

All the sources authors mention in the questionnaire reoccur in interview data. However, a more diverse range of responses are found in interview data. A symptom perhaps of the open-ended, in-depth nature of interviews compared to questionnaires and their fairly rigid structure. Lived experience is given greater emphasis by authors in the interview data and teaching experience is an additional source of knowledge a majority of the authors mention in interview. Yet, is strangely absent in the questionnaire responses. Authors agree a preference for first-hand experience over all other data sources (see Table 22). Vic recalls the advice Margaret Roberts gave to her PGCE students to visit everywhere that they teach about (line 076-9). Pragmatically, he concedes that this ideal is impossible. This impossibility is raised by all the authors. Interestingly, where the opportunity for a free choice of place arises, authors show a preference for writing about familiar places. Ash, is proud that he can use the Isle of Arran to ‘exemplify just about anything’, suggesting that it gives him confidence and a rich understanding of place. Although authors are unable to write about a reader’s local place, they can support students in learning about familiar or local places via textbook activities.

Table 22 Sources of knowledge as discussed in the interviews

Themes	No.	Lin	Oly	Reb	Jem	Ash	Vic	Sam	Paul	Ron
Own experience										
Travel/lived experience	9									
Teaching experience	7									
Other people/educators										
Own university education	9									
Academic papers/books	9									
Contemporaries	9									
Academics	8									
Professionals in the field	5									
Real people	5									
Own research	5									
Subject Association	4									
Ethnographic researchers	3									
Vicarious sources										
Previous textbooks	6									
Books, films, radio, music	9									
Internet/open access data	9									
Institutions i.e. IMF	8									
News/current affairs	5									
Teacher-written resource	4									
Key:										
Detailed discussion										
Some discussion										

Jem suggests that narratives ‘can be a very powerful way of writing about familiar places’ (line 342). She draws on Massey’s (1991) writing about her local high street in Kilburn, as she describes the local people at the same time as making a point about the interconnections between their lives and those of people in distant places. Such texts can inspire others to seek out place-based writing or to write about place themselves. Ash (line 158-65) identifies a story in the Financial Times about the 2011 Japanese tsunami which he thinks is empowering. He explains:

*These lovely clear examples of a pigment in a paint that could only be made in a factory in Japan that got washed away by the tsunami and that disrupted everything and I thought that was a lovely crystal-clear visualisation. I think kids have always liked ownership over tiny little facts that are really interesting and I suppose that makes that interesting to me, in the midst of this story about this enormous magnitude scale event, the story drills down to a little paint pigment that got washed away and what the implications of that were to global systems.*

Real-life stories such as a paint pigment being washed away in a tsunami, a coastal stack sitting in the middle of the field (Vic, line 482) or the tattiness of roads and cars in New York (Olly, line 185) are all striking images which can help students to remember the bigger story. Such crystal-clear visualisations are motivated by real world experience, events and change. Authors all appreciate that watching documentaries, the news and other programmes on the television help to inform them about people and places which they may not otherwise know about. This is important because ‘geography is a living subject and requires real-world exemplification’ (Paul, line 503). Paul shows the strongest opinion about the television, protesting that he ‘will not have a word said against the TV...the places I have travelled because of it’ (line 531-2). Paul (line 533) notes how the material he reads does not have to be geographical, but ‘he sees’ the geography in it never the less. Linda mentions how the cultural geography she studied at university inspires her ‘to listen to the views of others on the radio, on TV documentaries and on the Internet’ (line 241-2). These views are repeated by all authors.

Creative representations of place including film, music and books appeal to authors as they are made to entertain. All authors provide unique examples which feed their geographical imagination, including the story of Detroit as told by the journalist Charlie LeDuff (Linda, line 98), Steinbeck's American Rust Belt (Vic, line 232) and the film *The Hunt for Red October* (IMBd, 1990; Paul, line 143) which visualises the Atlantic's underwater canyons. Vic makes the following point in the questionnaire:

*TV series such as Morse convey a strong sense of what it is like to be in Oxford. The Americans do this so much better than we do – a vast country means that no one is likely to see any more than a small percentage of it. So, you can build that desire to see or awareness through song, films, TV or music. Westerns gave me a huge wish to see Monument Valley.*

Whether experienced directly or indirectly, all the authors acknowledge their role is to bring places to life on the page, giving students the opportunity to develop their own geographical imaginations. Ash and Jem pick up on the importance of storytelling, but in two contrasting ways. Jem's interest is in hearing from people who 'often do not have a voice' (Jem, line 151-2), while Ash sees the importance of being a storyteller himself and writing in a style that students will enjoy reading. Although authors like to visit the places they write about, as we have previously heard, this is not always possible and they must rely on more vicarious sources of knowledge to build a picture of place in the mind of school students.

#### **4.3.2 *Semantics and pitch of knowledge***

All the authors agree that it is important to maintain connections with the parent discipline, to keep their subject knowledge up-to-date, understand the current methods employed in research and set the upper limit when pitching their writing. One author (Jem, line 081-85) comments:

*Having access to sources of academic papers and books aimed at undergraduates was a benefit. I could see how particular aspects of a theme were being taught in university and update my geography knowledge about the level at which A level students should be studying.*

Paul (line 674-80) notes that the gap between geography in school and university is quite a concern for curriculum development:

*I so admire our colleagues at university, the pressures they are under means that there is virtually nobody involved in the exam boards in the way that they were when I started examining nearly 30 years ago. You don't get that. You can't if you have not got the time. That's one of the reasons why during the curriculum development we had this separation.*

Paul's concern was shared by politicians and a key reason why ALCAB was formed. The aim of ALCAB being to reconnect school and university geography through a revision of subject content (DfE, 2014a). Authors perceive this injection of academic thought into secondary education to be a good thing, progressing the school subject while helping to narrow the gap between the two geographies.

Increasing open access to academic texts further facilitates the spread of disciplinary ideas and research directly into schools. In all cases, authors find it useful to access such knowledge to develop their writing, especially when 'thinking about space and place' (Paul, line 032) and understanding 'different terminology' (Paul, line 026). Linda (line 38) describes 'plundering' the Geographical Association's back catalogue of teaching journals, as it was a particularly rich source of subject content and pedagogical knowledge. Sam (line 218) describes collecting and storing relevant geographical information in blog posts, a modern filing system which supports retrieval and sharing of material for later use. Several authors mention avoiding teacher-written resources and second-hand research which may propagate incorrect or out-of-date information, stereotypes and misconceptions, preferring instead to use contemporary information from original sources (Rebus, line 293; Olly, line 185; Ron, line 80).

All the authors in this study discuss the difficulty of pitching content at a suitable level for the range of students who will use an A level textbook. They speak of the need to address declining standards and grade inflation experienced prior to 2014, rather than responding to the government's messaging to be 'more challenging' and 'rigorous' (Gibb, 2014; DfE, 2014c). Reminiscing about his own

education and how the A level textbooks he read as a student ‘did all the things that the ALCAB panel was prescribing’, Ash (line 299) is cognisant of the commonly held perception that school standards have fallen and is pleased about ALCAB’s intervention at A level. Four of the authors suggest that pitch is a consideration for publishers. Some dealing with it by producing separate textbooks to cover each year of the A level. This was a tangible solution to manage more material and allow greater progression by pitching content in the second volume at a more challenging level. There is a marketing advantage to this strategy, as only half the subject content needs to be prepared for the first book, therefore it can be written, published and purchased by teachers ahead of single volume titles.

Authors deal with pitching content in a number of practical ways. Some see it as an opportunity to select content from a range of sources and repurpose it for A level students. Vic and Paul find educational resources written by charities to be a rich source of ‘people-focused’ data (Paul, line 383) which explore ‘real peoples’ lives’ (Vic, line 66). Several authors discuss making textbook content accessible by simplifying text, using tried and tested content from classroom practice and illustrating abstract and complex concepts with concrete, everyday places. One textbook uses the globally recognisable Uluru as an example of a spiritual site and 10 Downing Street as a political space (Raw *et al.*, 2016). A majority of the authors in this study avoid using a significant amount of geographical theory or incredibly abstract concepts such as social constructionism, as they are fairly inaccessible for most 17/18-year-olds. This concern is also raised by the ALCAB member during interview. Referring to a bullet point in a textbook called ‘a phenomenology approach’ (Skinner *et al.*, 2016, p.338), he comments that this is ‘simply too abstract a concept for a first year undergraduate, let alone an A level student, therefore it is inappropriate’. Pitch is seen by authors as an important mechanism to make texts and therefore A levels accessible for all students.

Authors also discuss pitching content by carefully selecting case studies according to their level of real-world complexity (Taylor, 2011). For example, when selecting a case study, Rebus and Ash discuss the importance of quantifiable facts about cause, effects and responses for students’ use in their examination

answers. Yet, authors caution against the use of particularly complex case studies which can confuse rather than enlighten students. An example given is the 2011 9.1-magnitude Tōhoku earthquake, tsunami and quasi-human induced nuclear meltdown, as salient points about the disaster and explanatory strategies are difficult to make succinctly. Jem (line 96-8) explains:

*The death toll is not a final number as there may well be further deaths due to cancer as a result of radiation from the nuclear power station, but these might not have occurred yet.*

Relatively simple case studies allow greater accessibility for all students, although they may not support high examination grades. As Ron (line 101-5) comments:

*You know the range of students that might use this book, so perhaps it comes out a bit simplistically and you have to depend on the more able students doing more and you have got to depend on the teachers doing more. It worries me that I do not think the teachers realise that they need to do more.*

Textbooks can provide a substantial, well-pitched and carefully framed body of knowledge. However, a student must use more educational resources than a textbook to achieve the highest A level grades.

#### **4.3.3 Data sourcing and verification**

Authors mention not always being able to visit the places they write about. The alternative is to spend time researching for source material and asking others for advice. Ash describes ‘floating around in the collective commons’, finding himself ‘in all kinds of places’ (line 354 and 361) searching for interesting and contemporary information. ‘Floating around’ is rather a superficial phrase, unreflective of the time and commitment authors dedicate to this pre-writing activity. While taking time to research, authors compare choices, weigh up the most appropriate examples and check data quality. Ash reports prioritising quantitative data from global organisations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) as he does not ‘need to double check those

data' (line 357). He insinuates that the cross verification or triangulation of more qualitative data from other sources is necessary, albeit time consuming. This time constraint is a key factor influencing the type and source of data authors select. Triangulation of data is a point of discussion for all authors. For example, Linda (line 229-31) mentions sourcing data from a range of places for verification purposes. ALCAB guidance requires a balance of quantitative and qualitative data (Evans, 2014; DfE, 2014a). Advice written in the Changing Places subject content asks educators to 'give particular weight to qualitative approaches involved in representing place' (DfE, 2014a, p.11). This point is verified by the ALCAB member during interview, who suggests that there needs to be a balance between quantitative and qualitative data sources at A level. According to Sam (line 267), using a variety of sources about real people and places 'adds another layer of authenticity' to his writing. By using a range of data sources, authors help to support and signpost ALCAB guidance for teachers and students.

#### **4.4 Theme 3: Valuing geographical perspectives**

The themes in this section reveal how A level geography authors value geographical and historical perspectives on people and places. These different perspectives reflect the societal context of the time of production and it is important to share these with students.

##### **4.4.1 *Place as process***

The context in which an author writes is bound by time. A preference for contemporary case studies is evident by comments from all the authors in this study. Although, one author raises the concern that an emphasis on the contemporary, from the last 30 years according to the legacy Edexcel (2008) specification, can reduce the value placed on historical geography. Authors are pleased that no such restriction is written in the 2016 specifications. Paul suggests that the characteristics of a place cannot be understood by 'simply by looking at today' (line 175-6), but rather by understanding punctuation points in history. He goes on to suggest that these events, also known as turning points, can cause reverberations and a consequent change in thinking or management. Authors mention a number of examples of turning points at interview. These include the M4 Corridor, where footloose, modern technologies replaced traditional heavy

industries in the 1980s, and urban regeneration in Sheffield, where people moved from slum dwellings to corridors in the sky in the 1950s. Jem recalls listening to an audio recording of a Sheffield resident, as part of a museum installation, talking about the new flats at Park Hill and ‘hearing the joy in his voice’ (line 338) as he describes his new home as a ‘space to live, not just to survive’ (Jem, line 330). This viewpoint was in juxtaposition with her own memory of this estate as a place of decline, fear and avoidance. Both examples illustrate that our view of place has a historical element and is strongly influenced by our own experience. Jem (line 494-96) reminds us:

*It is important that we, as geographers, remember that places are in flux, that if we record what a place is like, we must realise that it continues to change even before we can publish a book.*

As suggested by Jem, places and our perceptions of place constantly change. The rate of change can be so rapidly, that authors avoid certain places and case studies. Sam uses the examples of a proposed development in Leeds and a dam project in Brazil. In both cases the texts are unclear as to whether the projects went ahead. Sam suggests that ‘you can’t change the book when it is printed, it is too late’ (line 244), therefore a preference for case studies with some form of longevity is necessary. This is possibly the reason why fictional places are used for theoretical models in textbooks with a long shelf life, as they avoid unnecessary ‘redundancy with change’ (Sam, line 248-9).

Aware that their own perspective comes from a certain standpoint, authors seek to provide a balance of views in their writing. When describing places, authors use contrasting views. Vic draws on different ethnic and religious groups and Linda draws on first-hand descriptions from local residents. Olly describes how people living in polluted environments such as Nigeria’s Ogun State can be portrayed as victims. Yet, they are often part of the problem and this view must also be presented. By representing a range of views and voices, authors can provide students with the opportunity to make up their own mind about place. Social media and technology can help authors to reach out and incorporate these

different voices in their writing. Although, Olly (line 334-8) worries that by presenting different accounts:

*You leave students asking well who is right and who is wrong? And the answer is well there is the choice, you have to make that for yourself and the tendency is to give them a nice neat answer wrapped up in a bow. You have to leave it in the air, so that students can discover it for themselves.*

According to Olly, knowledge is not fixed. In fact, several authors agree with this perspective and hold constructivist views of knowledge, such that representations of place ‘are social constructs’ (Olly, line 464) and no-one can ‘faithfully’, ‘authentically’ or ‘accurately’ represent place (Jem, line 249; Ash, line 340; Linda, line 259). Linda (line 266-9) develops this idea by suggesting:

*If you get students thinking for themselves then it reduces the possibility that you share inaccurate representations of a place, because they are developing their own subjective understanding.*

This view of knowledge empowers students to generate their own knowledge and form their own conclusions about people and places.

#### **4.4.2 Experienced places and geographical imaginations**

All the authors discuss the benefits of travelling to experience different places. Otherwise, their perspectives are only based on vicarious representations from the media and so on. As Vic (line 464-6) recalls:

*Students I take on fieldtrips to London are thinking Oh God we are going to East London...Is Hackney the crime capital of the world?*

Vic juxtaposes this image with the reality that crime has fallen by 40 per cent in Hackney since 2014, demonstrating that geographical imaginations can be stuck in the past, even when place has moved on. Rebus, Olly, Sam and Paul all raise the concern that they are not terribly well travelled, therefore they rely on developing their imagination of place by reading and watching the TV (recall the

discussion in Section 4.3.1). Seeing the world through a geographical lens is key. Yet authors are acutely aware that students have not developed this particular skill. Jem (line 361-3) explains:

*Teachers need to work with students to break down false imaginations about place, by providing more direct experiences of place and more authentic representations of place, using a range of real-world images, film and voices.*

Olly's account of 'lumps and bumps in the road' and 'tatty cars' in New York (line 183) is a reminder that the reality of place can be quite different from our geographical imagination. Experience not only affects our conceptions of places, it is also a key source of information authors draw on when writing.

#### **4.5 Discussion of the overarching theme 'know-what'**

Authors see themselves as knowledgeable, critical and reflective practitioners who draw on years of experience as 'good classroom operatives' (Paul, line 629). My findings suggest that this human capital is essential for making wise decisions during the complex task of writing a textbook. As mentioned in the literature review, educational knowledge is not only realised through curriculum, but also through pedagogy and evaluation (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). With experience across all three message systems, an author's experience helps support Alexander's (2004) understanding of pedagogy, which is broader than teaching strategies and includes curriculum and content choice, page design, effective use of space, text and illustrations. The authors in this study employ a number of techniques, such as the use of side headings, tinted background and text boxes, to cue the reader as to the nature and importance of particular textbook content. For example, key geographical concepts are always defined, then applied to the context of a case study or exemplar. These techniques may seem obvious, but signposting is important for accessibility. Although A level geography is perceived as a content-orientated curriculum 'composed of expository text' (Graves and Murphy, 2000, p.231) and is 'more connected with closed styles of teaching and learning' (Lee and Catling, 2016a, p.351), several authors emphasise the time they spend writing

textbook activities that prioritise debate and discussion. This approach to activities does not endorse current curriculum traditionalism or the banking concept of education (Freire, 1970; Beck, 2013). Instead, it provides the opportunity for students to be active learners, to connect their own knowledge with subject knowledge and develop independent geographical thinking. This supports Mishra's (2015) idea that textbook questions should focus on social relations and provide an interactive space for learners. This has the potential to cause tension where a learner is positioned 'as an asocial and passive object' (Mishra, 2015, p.129) and teachers focus on uncontroversial knowledge and teaching to the test, rather than enquiry (Roberts, 2013; Ferretti, 2013).

Working in the pedagogic recontextualising field (Bernstein, 1990, 2000), textbook authors are aware of the powerful position they hold (Waugh, 2000). Their choices are all the more important at A level, where the endorsement process approves, verifies and ultimately legitimises the specification coverage and quality of textbook content. When applying the rules of pedagogic discourses with 'the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations' (Shulman, 1986, p.9), authors can make school geography comprehensible to students. This textbook pedagogy (Long and Roberson, 1966) requires authors to draw from a range of knowledge domains including disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge and knowledge of learners (Shulman, 1986) as they select, organise and incorporate knowledge into their work. The authors in this study value classroom experience as the means to develop subject content suitable for A level students. Furthermore, authors appreciate the underlying rules of social order or regulative discourse, to contextualise textbook content within the society in which knowledge is created and balancing this with real-world case studies, illustrations and examples.

Authors speak about the importance of drawing on a range of sources of information and a balance of qualitative and quantitative data, ensuring that data is cross-validated from at least two sources. This view aligns with the literature and ALCAB (Biesta, 2017; Evans, 2014). Winter (1996) suggests that people who decode policy text need to be careful to avoid the misrepresentation of people and place in the process. If we consider that textbooks are a social rather than an

asocial product, that ‘embody a particular way of understanding, a particular interpretation of the place it is depicting’ (Massey, 1995, p.20), then, according to Harré (1979), care should be taken to provide learners with a number of different interpretations of the same phenomena. Authors in this study feel strongly that their writing includes authentic voices and different perspectives. Taylor (2011) suggests that these representations are nuanced and diverse, to avoid misconceptions or the formation of stereotypes in students’ minds. Kádár and Farsang’s (2017) research on misconceptions could not establish how or why certain misconceptions form. However, they did conclude ‘that teachers and textbooks are the most important sources of geographical information’ (Kádár and Farsang, 2017, p.43). Authors understand that their own moral compass should guide decisions about how they represent people and places. In a study with geography textbook authors, Lee and Catling (2016b, p.62) found that authors tackle student misconceptions ‘with the need for the careful explanation of geographical ideas, content, skills and vocabulary’. The textbook is therefore an important feature of the resource ecology of the classroom.

Authors in this study discuss sourcing geographical knowledge from first-hand experience and a surprisingly wide range of vicarious sources. A significant number of these sources are not academic in nature. As geography is the study of the world around us, this is no surprise. However, it does raise the concern that A level geography textbooks are not an effective bridge between school and university (Tate and Sword, 2013). In Knight’s (2007) experience, undergraduate textbooks struggle to keep up with developments in academic geography. The situation for A level geography is more acute. Authors are rarely academic geographers and consequently there is a delay in conceptual change (Kuhn, 1962) and new knowledge from the academy being communicated with the geography education community. In some school textbooks this can cause the propagation of outdated theory, generalisations and misconceptions such as the idea that convection currents are the key driver of plate movement (Knight, 2007; Kádár and Farsang, 2017). Having observed a reduction in the number of academics involved in the work of assessment organisations over the last 30 years, one author suggests that this has increased the disconnect between academics and school geography.

Reading academic papers and primary research on different places is important to all the authors in this study. At interview, three of the nine authors mention being matriculated to universities with access to their libraries, books and journals. Although academic knowledge is perceived to be invaluable, university paywalls limit access for six of the authors. Gibb (2016) suggests that access, language and time prevent most teachers from accessing research and it ‘fails to impact on the classroom’. The General Teaching Council (GTC) now provides free online access to a range of eBooks and the Education Source Database (EBSCO) and argue that ‘it is essential that teachers are provided with relevant access to research publications to enable them to engage with research as stated in their Professional Standards and become an integral part of professional learning’ (GTCS, 2018 online). None of the authors, not even practicing teachers, mention this channel of access. Having discussed the problem of paywalls, authors are still able to access freely available academic work via online repositories such as Google Scholar and Research Gate.

In terms of the accessibility-complexity of place knowledge, Janan and Wray (2012, p.1), in a study on readability, echo Fry’s (1977) assertion that ‘the most important pedagogical decision that teachers make is “making the match”, that is, ensuring that learners are supplied with reading materials... at an appropriate level of difficulty’. In an era of widening participation in Higher Education, this requires content for the full ability range of A level students. A textbook in which subject content is too accessible, may not be challenging and one that is too complex may limit student progress (Taylor, 2011). The authors are aware that the 2016 textbooks were produced with the politicised aim of improving the UK’s educational standing with a ‘challenging’ level of content (Oates, 2014; Gibb, 2014). However, publishers continue to aim content at the middle-ability student. Waugh (2000, p.98) puts this down to the economics of publishing:

*The production of a complete mixed ability book with material capable of extending the full ability range of pupils would be both physically very large and, apart from possibly being unmanageable, certainly expensive.*

To this end, teachers must be made aware that A-grade students will require additional input beyond textbook content.

The ever-changing nature of place and students' experience in the world make geography a particularly relevant school subject. Yet, the authors in this study see geographical knowledge as being somewhat problematic, due to its provisional and positional nature (Winter, 1996). Authors are careful how they construct and represent perceptions and knowledge (Winter, 1996). As Bussey *et al.* (2013, p.9) suggest, 'two individuals who experience the same phenomenon may focus on different features and, thus, come to understand the phenomenon differently'. With a low capacity for cumulative knowledge-building in human geography, a result of the segmental organisation of knowledge structures (Bernstein, 2000), there will always be debate and controversy over 'what' is the best geographical knowledge to transmit and 'if' this knowledge has canonical status (Von Hallberg, 1984; Maton, 2014a). Beyond subject knowledge, authors require knowledge of the needs, perceptions and background of the student cohort to determine the most suitable learning strategies, resources and approach to take. This is only possible due to their extensive classroom experience.

When writing about variation theory and chemistry, Bussey *et al.* (2013, p.11) suggest that the goal of chemical educators is to help 'students construct a shared (and, hopefully, scientific) understanding of a given concept'. Such a sentiment is not limited to chemistry and is perhaps one reason why A level specifications look to fairly traditional content for reasons of familiarity. As Pointon (2008, p.9) suggests 'from the HE perspective, this may be advantageous, ensuring students have a good grounding in basic concepts and processes prior to undergraduate study'. With the inclusion of more contemporary geography in the revised A level subject content (DfE, 2014a; Evans, 2014), authors understand that they need to carefully mediate and clearly represent the new core units, so that textbook readers can fully engage with disciplinary concepts, knowledge and methods.

Textbook authors try to avoid viewing place through the lens of those who hold a position of power. This accords with the literature. Massey (2005, p.10) reminds us that the story of the world cannot be told as the story of 'the West', therefore a textbook should include various images and multiple voices to

describe and explain the characteristics of place. Winter (1996, p.379) suggests this develops ‘an understanding of the historical, political, economic, social and environmental influences at work in the country as well as an understanding of the power of texts in constructing and representing knowledge’. Textbook authors may want to ‘present a balanced view’ (Waugh, 2000, p.100), but there is not always the space to make this possible. Contrasting views can be presented in text or shared by students while completing textbook activities. This can support ‘social constructivism in action’ (Winter, 1996, p.380) and encourage a broader view of the world (Taylor, 2004).

#### **4.6 Summary**

The findings and discussion presented in this chapter regarding the nature and source of knowledge used in a textbook, provides evidence that authors draw significantly on their knowledge, skills and capabilities or human capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, p.3) to produce textbooks of a high standard. Moreover, the data indicates that writing a textbook is a complex process, requiring expertise across Bernstein’s (2000) three message systems. This expertise is key to understanding how authors are able to recontextualise knowledge, confirm its suitability for students to use in assessment responses and draft assessment material mirroring the minimal amount of sample assessment material available. Furthermore, it helps authors make professional judgements about the form, sequence, pitch and complexity of subject content for inclusion in a textbook. Surprisingly, questionnaire and interview data indicate that authors draw on a wide range of sources of knowledge when creating a textbook, few of which are academic books or journals. This infers that authors develop their conceptual framework during their own education. It further explains why there is a divergence between the content of school textbooks and developments in the academy. Adding to an author’s conceptual framework requires reading, research and contact with academics for which there is not always time. This thread is developed with regard to influential others in Chapter 6. Textbooks are a privileged educational resources. They are not only a source of school knowledge, they also act as pedagogic transmitters, guiding teachers with regard to suitable

activities, stretch and challenge assignments, collaborative tasks, independent study, summative assessment questions and model answers.

Having explored the overarching theme know-what, focusing on the nature and source of knowledge used in a textbook, the next chapter explores the choices authors make when selecting places to be included in a textbook. Such 'know-where' is important if we want to provide students with a good geographical education about different people and places in the world.

## 5 How do authors select and represent place in an A level geography textbook?

The findings for this research question focus on the complex decision-making process authors experience when selecting and representing places in an A level geography textbook and are grouped under the overarching theme ‘know-where’. Using the words of authors taken directly from the interview transcripts, a narrative for the theme ‘know-where’ is presented in Appendix D.

### 5.1 Introducing the overarching theme ‘know-where’

The overarching theme ‘know-where’ recognises that the selection of place is influenced by a number of determinants such as the availability of data, an author’s familiarity with particular places and the amount of time available for authors to research, read and make informed decisions. The findings for this research question are organised within the following three sub-themes: ‘Distribution of places’, ‘Choosing places’ and ‘Diverse and changing places’ and are presented in Table 23. The first sub-theme focuses on the distribution of places authors select. The second focuses on the place selection process itself and the final sub-theme focuses on the character and diversity of places authors select.

Table 23 Themes identified under the overarching theme ‘know-where’

Sub-themes	Micro-themes
Distribution of places	National distribution of places Global and European distribution of places
Choosing places	Local places Distant places
Diverse and changing places	Comparable/contrasting places Exceptional and representative places Changing places

Prior to discussing each theme, the definitions of place from the questionnaire and authors’ conceptions of place according to the Q-sort are discussed.

### 5.2 Defining and understanding place

The definitions of place provided in the questionnaire responses are presented in Table 24. These give an indication of authors’ conceptions of place and their geographical perspectives.

Table 24 Definitions of place

positivist construct	physical geography <b>spaceist</b>		human geography <b>placeist</b>
a specific location	a location with unique features	a physical location with social rules	a space given meaning by people
Ron Rebus	Olly Vic Ash	Paul	Linda Jem Sam

All of the authors emphasise the spatial aspect of place. Two of the authors describe it as a positivist construct, as ‘somewhere specific’ (Ron) and ‘a location on the earth’s surface whose area can be defined at a range of scales’ (Rebus). These definitions are more aligned with the concept of location, only the first aspect of place according to Agnew (1987). The other seven responses are more commensurate with placeist and spaceist perspectives (Table 25). Four authors view place from a subjective, humanistic stance and study people’s lives in places, communities and cultures and three have spaceist perspectives focusing on the spatial patterns, connections and differences between physical and human features of place (Catling, 2004).

Table 25 Individual authors' perceptions on place

Author	Geographical perspective on place
Rebus	A location on the earth’s surface; its area can be defined at a range of scales.
Ron	Somewhere specific.
<b>Placeists</b>	
Linda	A space given meaning (s) by people – has a location but also social rules and people have particular emotional reactions to it/attachment to it.
Jem	A space with personal or shared meaning influenced by experience and representations.
Sam	A meaningful segment of geographical space.
Paul	A location with both objective and subjective meanings with perception having a significant role.
<b>Spaceists</b>	
Olly	A place has one dominant characteristic generalisation that distinguishes it from neighbouring ones, that over-rides all the connecting similarities.
Ash	A portion of space which is, or is perceived to be, unique, distinct or bounded in some way. At varying scales.
Vic	A named geographical area, of almost any dimension, about which we can identify and ascribe particular features or characteristics.

The authors holding a placeist perspective discuss multiple meanings of place in their interviews. For example, Jem (line 225) describes the Mediterranean as a

gateway and also a tourist destination. Considering the central position of place in the A level geography specification (DfE, 2014a), it is interesting that three of the authors have a spaceist perspective, focusing on ‘connecting similarities’ (Olly), with unique ‘portions of space’ (Ash), and areas with ‘particular features or characteristics’ (Vic). Expanding on this point, Vic notes that places should be referenced in terms of their connections to other places, otherwise, ‘we are in danger of the case study approach, studying places because they illustrate a concept, not getting into what the place is about’ (line 283-6). Although Ash’s written definition presents a spaceist perspective, during interview he reveals a more globalist perspective when he suggests that all citizens should have a good geographical education, to be informed about the Earth and be able to develop a good geographical map. This idea is expanded in Section 8.4, when the purpose of a geography education is discussed.

The last question on the questionnaire asked authors to sketch a picture of a familiar place and label what is going on. The difference aspects of these pictures are discussed to further shed light on how authors perceive place. Of the eight pictures completed by authors, five are drawn from a bird’s eye view, two are drawn from an oblique view and one is a model of a settlement. Of the eight drawings, three focus on cities, two focus on towns and three focus on villages. The authors all draw the places where they live, as these are the settlements they can describe in detail. The authors all drew between three and 16 named features on their pictures and included up to four qualitative statements about how the residents or visitors feel about the place. The activities drawn depend on the type of people they are and whether they have families or dogs who use the settlements in different ways. One author focuses on the places in the settlement where children can play, go to activities and go to school. Four authors focus on particular issues facing the settlement such as tourism, safety, affordable housing and anti-social behaviour. Two of the authors include affective mapping, adding how they feel about certain areas, for example ‘Waitrose is a happy place and so too is the local family park’(Ash). What can be concluded about this task and authors’ perception of place is that the authors all think and present place in diverse ways.

All the authors completed a Q-sort with 25 statements about place (see Section 3.7.3 for research methods and Figure 23 for an example) to help make sense of their understanding of place.

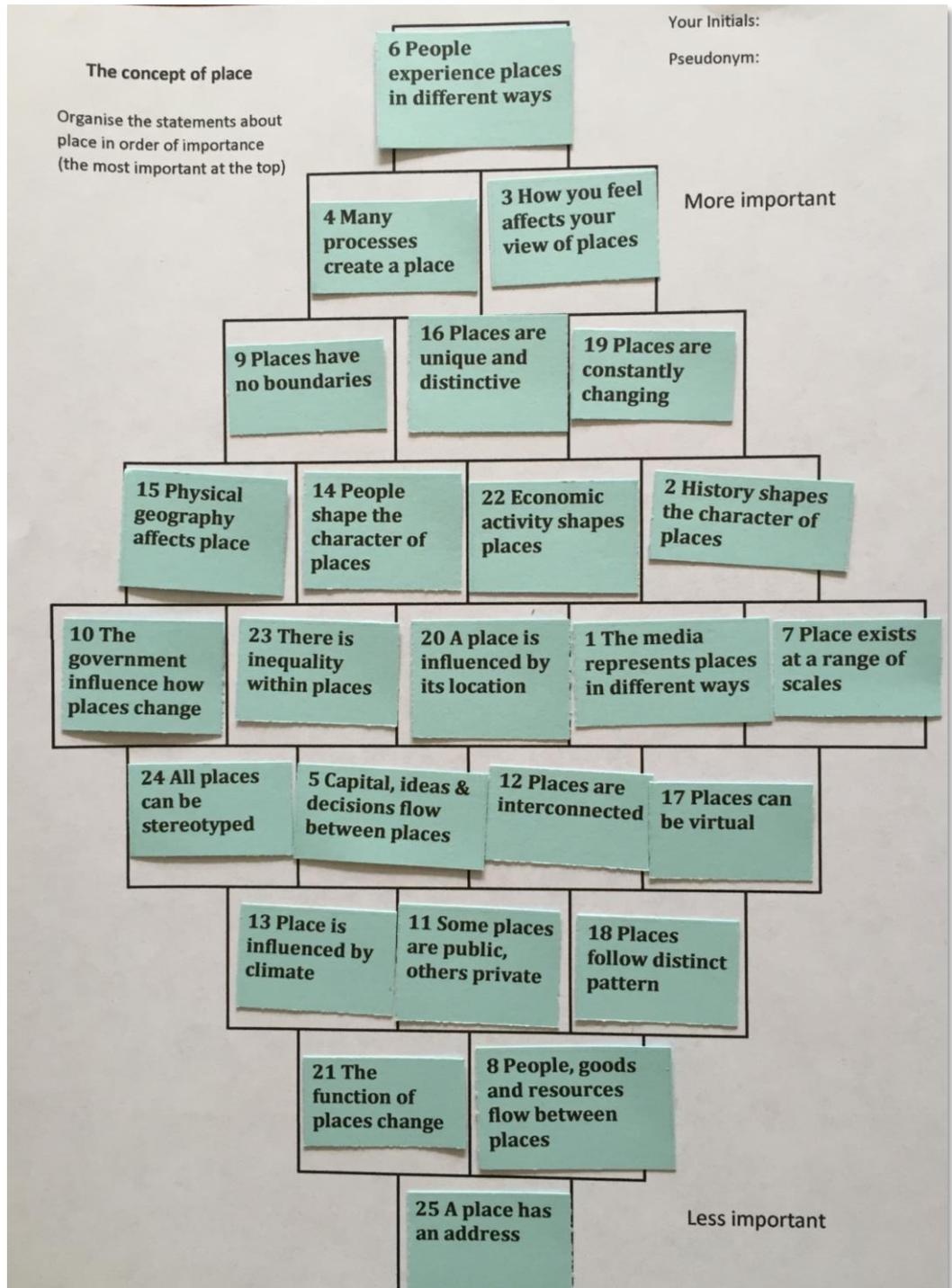


Figure 23 Rebus' Q-sort of 25 statements from most to least important

Out of 25 statements, there are six consensus statements which are key to grouping authors' subjectivity (shown with a white background in Figure 24).

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
17. Places can be virtual	25. A place has an address	13. Place is influenced by climate	11. Some places are public, others private	5. Capital, ideas & decisions flow between places	7. Place exists at a range of scales	2. History shapes the character of places	14. People shape the character of places	16. Places are unique and distinctive
	9. Places have no boundaries	20. A place is influenced by its location	15. Physical geography affects place	24. All places can be stereotyped	10. The government influence how places change	22. Economic activity shapes places	12. Places are interconnected	
	8. People, goods and resources flow between places		4. Many processes create a place	21. The function of places change	1. The media represents places in different ways	23. There is inequality within places		
			19. Places are constantly changing	3. How you feel affects your view of places	6. People experience places in different ways			
				18. Places follow distinct pattern				

**Legend**

- \* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.05$
- \*\* Distinguishing statement at  $P < 0.01$
- ▶ z-Score for the statement is higher than in all the other factors
- ◀ z-Score for the statement is lower than in all the other factors
- Consensus statement

Figure 24 Q-sort consensus statements

An analysis of the resulting nine Q-sorts reveals that there are three distinctive understandings of place, where authors' statements are in a similar order and are seen to cluster (see Figure 25), suggesting that their ideas converge.

Linda and Vic show a family resemblance with strong positive Factor 1 scores. Factor 1 has an Eigenvalue of 3.83 with 43 per cent of the explained variance. Factor 1 explains Q-sorts where the statement 'places are interconnected' has been prioritised and 'there is inequality within places' is seen as more important than 'many processes create places'. Jem, Ash and Ron show a family resemblance with strong positive Factor 2 scores. Factor 2 has an Eigenvalue of 0.65 with 7 per cent explained variance. Factor 2 explains Q-sorts where the statement 'places are unique and distinctive' has been prioritised and where 'places are interconnected' is seen as more important than 'places are constantly changing'. Olly, Rebus, Sam and Paul make up the final group with weak positive Factor 1 and 2 scores. They agree that 'places are unique and distinctive' is more important than 'the media represents places in different ways'. The Q-sort also reveals that within some family resemblance groups, ideas about place are quite divergent. This is why Factor 1 and Factor 2 only account for 50 per cent of the explained variance in the data. The results do not fully align with the geographical perspectives discussed earlier in this section. This comes to the fore when authors discuss their statement order.

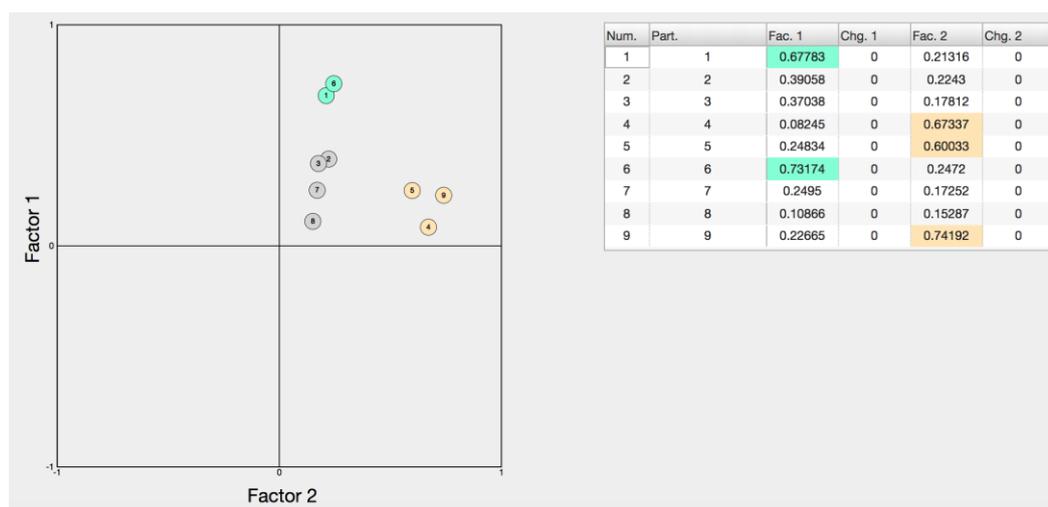


Figure 25 Visualisation of the three author groups and their understandings of place

The verbal commentary on the Q-sort activity is a strength of the research design and a particularly rich source of information about how authors prioritise subject

content and their geographical perspectives (see Section 3.7.3 for the methods). The purpose of a geographical education and the reason to learn about aspects of place are key drivers in this process. When discussing the concept of place, Olly makes the point that ‘place is a very difficult thing to teach and for students to understand and get their head around’ (line 448-9). Therefore, he prioritises statements which would need careful explanation for students, including big conceptual ideas like place. Jem explains that ‘the skill of the geographer is not necessarily in presenting the most contemporary case studies, but those that best exemplify a particular theme or concept’ (line 500-1). She mentions how statements such as ‘places are always changing’ (line 502) are prioritised because they are more important than statements which do not relate to the ideas of process, time and change.

Ash and Ron approach the Q-sort at a subject scale. Ash sees the task as an opportunity to question what is important in geography and asks whether he can ‘slightly sabotaging the task?’ (line 369) by first picking out the ‘good conceptual points’ (line 370) such as ‘places exist at a range of scales’ which exemplifies his thinking. He then groups less important statements together and comments ‘now we are getting down to sub-domains of geography’ (line 371). Ron uses a similar strategy to Ash. She also subverts the task, placing all the statements which relate to geography’s sub-disciplines outside of the Q-sort scaffold. This allows her to ‘pick out things that were sort of big ideas’ (line 226), ‘the ideas you would want to get across to students’ (line 230). The Q-sort provides a useful lens through which to understand place. It highlights the value authors place on conceptual themes such as scale, interconnectivity and subjectivity over ideas such as places have an address, can be virtual and are influenced by climate.

Even where Q-sort statement positions are closely matched, the justification of the order of statements is somewhat different. Linda and Vic both put ‘places are unique and distinctive’, ‘places are interconnected’ and ‘people shape the character of places’ in the most important three positions. However, Linda sees synopticity as key to her statement positions and prioritises statements related to new A level specification content. She does concede that ‘places have no boundaries is perhaps a theoretical step too far’ (line 328). Conversely, Vic

believes that experience is key to ordering the statements ‘as that is where you are starting with students’ (line 456). He justifies putting ‘places are unique and distinctive’ as the most important statement because:

*It is one of the things that students least recognise, yet defend the most. If you live in Yorkshire, people are crazy about defending Yorkshire. That is related to their identity. Peoples’ identity and how they relate to themselves and the place they live in is so important. (line 491-4)*

In concluding this section, I will argue that it is difficult, perhaps impossible to categorise the geographical perspectives authors hold about place. The Q-sort is certainly a useful stimulus activity, evoking a rich discussion of the authors’ metacognition about geography’s big ideas and overarching concepts. However, caution must be taken when classifying geographical subjective viewpoints from questionnaires and Q-sorts, as these sources of data are reductive and results can lead to generalisations.

### **5.3 Theme 1: Distribution of places**

Authors in this study were asked in the questionnaire (Qu.6) to select places which A level students should study in the UK, Europe and worldwide. These choices are presented in Figure 26, 27 and 28. During interview there was an opportunity for authors to justify their choices. All the authors discuss their intention to select a broad range of places at a range of scales (national to global).

#### **5.3.1 National distribution of places**

UK places selected by authors are presented in a word cloud in Figure 26, which gives greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the data. There is agreement by all the authors on only two choices: London and the students’ own locality. All the authors suggest that London’s importance is linked to its multiple functions, size and capital city status. Beyond key cities such as London and Manchester, authors show a significant variation in the places they select. All the authors note the importance of a students’ own locality for reasons of familiarity, relevance and accessibility. This theme is further discussed in Section 5.4.1.



Figure 26 Places in the UK selected by A level geography authors (wordle.net)

When selecting places in the UK, a majority of authors provide place examples in pairs. These binary choices include urban/rural, accessible/ remote, southern/northern, economically successful/ deprived, city/ countryside, inland/ coastal, human environment/ physical environment. Such a routine for selecting contrasting places is a feature of school geography. However, it can be problematic as it is difficult to compare certain examples as their differences are too stark. This will be further explored in Section 5.5.1. Only one author provides a more nuanced choice of places in their questionnaire response, referring to the core, periphery and transitional zone of the UK with reference to London, North Scotland and Blackpool respectively. Blackpool is seen as representative of a place somewhere in-between urban and rural. In the interviews, another three authors discuss in-between places. For example, Andy discusses the rural-urban fringe and Vic discusses the idea of remote places on a continuum from accessible to rural then to distant and isolated remote places. Using a continuum of places can prevent a deficit view of one place over the other, which can occur when comparing two places.

### 5.3.2 Global and European distribution of places



Figure 27 Places in Europe selected by A level geography authors (wordle.net)



Figure 28 Places worldwide selected by A level geography authors (wordle.net)

When asked to select European and global places (Figure 27 and 28), all the authors follow a similar decision-making process to the previous UK examples. This includes using binaries such as core/ periphery and power-rich/ power-poor. During interview, all the authors describe conceptually group places when selecting from a world of possibilities. For example, Sam suggests that places located on plate margins, coastlines and the Mediterranean can be grouped as places on the edge and therefore taught through a number of themes such as tectonics, coastal management or even contemporary conflict. Likewise, empty places can be used to link cold environments including the Arctic with the newly-built, yet uninhabited, cities of China. In these examples, places are selected due to a particular connection. Authors discuss a number of these themes such as environments at risk, improving places, amazing places and migrant routes. Each

theme allows for a range of places to be explored through enquiry and is a powerful way to decide which places students should study.

At the European and global scale, authors chose a much wider range of landscapes compared to the UK scale. These include mountainous regions (the Alps) and extreme environments (Iceland and Antarctica). It appears that authors do not select places related to contemporary issues at the UK scale. However, they are a significant determinant at the European scale, with authors mentioning the migrant crisis, borders, food production and risky places in relation to Greece, the Mediterranean, the Champagne Region and the Apennines respectively. Three of the nine authors discuss the importance of looking at the geographical spread of case studies on a map. Rebus (line 145) notes that in some KS3 and GCSE textbooks, case studies are located on a world map printed on the inside cover. However, this is a missed opportunity at A level. Mapping places can reduce the likelihood of authors producing a ‘polka dot view of the world’ (Vic, line 028) and allow students to locate and connect their place with other places worldwide.

In terms of the scale of place, of the 131 places selected by authors in the questionnaire, most are at a city scale in the UK and Europe and at a country or multi-country scale for global examples (Table 26). The scale of place tends to increase with distance from the UK. This accords with A level Geography subject content (DfE, 2014a, p.10) which says that ‘study must involve moving out from the local place to encompass regional, national, international and global scales in order to understand the dynamics of place’.

Table 26 Scale of places selected

Scale of place	UK	Europe	Worldwide
area (smaller than a city)	6	0	0
city-scale	15	13	12
regional scale	11	2	2
country-scale	0	13	28
multi-country regional scale	0	9	16
continental scale	0	0	6

Two authors mention the scale of place being an issue. After writing about the physical features and energy resources of New Zealand, a textbook reviewer said to Olly that New Zealand ‘is not really a place, it is too big’ (line 119). Olly was asked to reflect on the scale of the place he had selected, he recalls being

asked ‘are you choosing places because they are representative of a broader set of factors or are you choosing them because they are almost noteworthy because of their exception?’ (line 085-7). Olly edited his work, adding a much smaller-scale example to conclude his case study. In another case study, Olly added a justification for his choice of place so the reader would know that ‘this is the most rapidly eroding coastline, so it is important for that reason’ (line 089-91). At the other end of the spectrum, Paul recalls having concerns about the local being defined by his assessment organisation at the scale of an enumeration district (approximately 175 households). He ‘felt that it needed to be bigger because characteristics at this small scale ‘could be thrown in a very odd way by one or two strange bits of demography’ (line 056-7). Both authors recall being empowered to negotiate the definition of concepts with publishers and reviewers to avoid ambiguity.

In terms of selection by continent, over half of the worldwide places selected by authors are from Asia (52.5%) and a fifth from Africa (19.7%). This might suggest that places in continents such as South America, North America and Australasia are under-represented. However, the proportion of places selected by continent is fairly proportional to the total population (Table 27). Antarctica is somewhat of an anomaly, with no permanent residents and is included because it is a significant place in the geographical imagination of authors, a result of it being an extreme environment and an adventure destination which has featured significantly in geography’s history (Livingstone, 1992) and contrasts significantly with every other continent.

Table 27 Selection of place by continent

Country	Frequency of selection	Percentage of selection	Percentage of land (UN, 2015)	Percentage of population (UN, 2015)
Asia	32	52.5	29.5	59.7
Africa	12	19.7	20.4	16.4
Europe	0	0	6.8	9.9
N. America	7	11.5	16.5	7.8
Antarctica	5	8.2	9.2	0
S. America	3	4.9	12.0	5.7
Australasia	2	3.3	5.9	0.5

Question 6 of the questionnaire asks authors to select five places in the UK, five European places and ten places worldwide. This forced selection of places would not happen while textbook writing. In order to understand the selection of places authors make in reality, the distribution of countries and UK regions presented in the Changing Places chapters of five A level textbooks (see Appendix F for the place lists) are presented in the pairs of maps below (Figure 29 to 33) using <https://www.amcharts.com>.

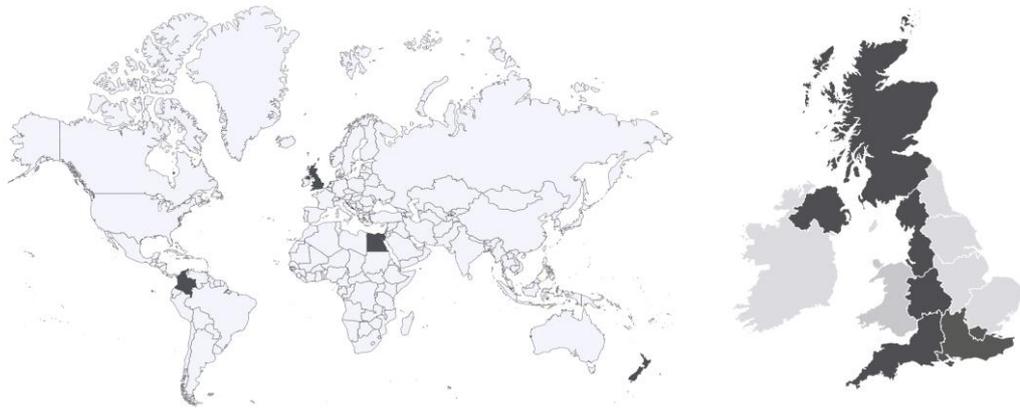


Figure 29 Countries and UK regions in the AQA Hodder Changing Places chapter



Figure 30 Countries and UK regions in the AQA Oxford Changing Places chapter



Figure 31 Countries and UK regions in the AQA Cambridge Changing Places chapter



Figure 32 Countries and UK regions in the OCR Hodder Changing Places chapter



Figure 33 Countries and UK regions in the Edexcel Oxford Changing Places chapter

The maps show that very few places are represented in the Changing Places textbook chapters, especially at a global scale. Places in Africa and South America are under-represented. Places in Oceania and Asia appear in just two of the textbooks. The Global South is completely unrepresented in two textbooks. Places in North America appear in four of the textbooks. Coverage of the UK is much better than for more distant places, although Scotland and Wales only appear in two textbooks. There is a balanced view of the UK in three of the chapters and a southern-centric view provided in two of the chapters. Although the Republic of Ireland is in the British Isles, but not the UK, there is no coverage it in any of the textbooks. Textbook data suggests that the distribution of places selected by authors is not equal, that certain places such as the United States are more likely to be selected than any place in the continents of South America or Africa.

## 5.4 Theme 2: Choosing places

The second sub-theme presented here is ‘Choosing places’. The key ideas are the importance of distant places for students to develop a good geographical map of the world, while developing an understanding of their local place through a geographical lens. All of the authors suggest that at a time of curriculum change, a new selection of places should be aired to readdress the over- and under-representation of certain places in legacy textbooks. Most of the authors stress that it is difficult to represent certain places. Jem puts this down to a lack of available resources for distant and remote places (line 137) and Ron notes that language barriers can limit accessibility to certain resources. While discussing the theme of population, Ash (line 011) suggests that authors ‘use their professional judgement’ to determine which places they write about. He cites China and India as two countries with large populations which tend to be over-represented in textbooks. He also notes how Indonesia, as the fourth most populous country in the world, with a population of 261.1 million (World Bank, 2016), is ‘overlooked’ (line 017). Paul suggests that textbooks can inspire teachers and reach all sorts of students with a range of ‘never before used places’ (line 292). Sam discusses trying to include somewhere from every continent, level of development and level of resource use while avoiding ‘places done to death’ (line 025). Although, he also notes that this is not always possible (line 379).

When asked in the questionnaire about the characteristics of places which make them worthy of study, authors identify a range of significant aspects (Table 28). The results show that the characteristics of place which help geographers to see and understand our place in the world are of particular interest. Certain socio-economic, political and cultural aspects help explain the interconnection between places and the unique characteristics and functions of individual places. Some concepts like reach, recognition and risk are conceptual, whereas others such as relevance, awe and wonder are what make geography interesting to students.

Table 28 Significant characteristics of place

Significant characteristics	Frequency
Socio-economic/political/cultural	8
Global reach	6
Connections between places	6
Landscape/physical environment	6

Significant characteristics	Frequency
Good exemplar of a key concept	6
Relevant events or places	5
Changing places	4
Risky places	3
Awe and wonder	2

Landscapes and physical environments can be awe-inspiring and as Olly suggests can ‘engender something inside us that we like or hate’. Relevant places might be those which play a role in students’ lives, places with global relevance or those where significant events have taken place. The sheer variety of characteristics and examples used by authors indicate that multiple determinants influence an author’s choices.

#### 5.4.1 *Local places*

According to the interview and questionnaire data, all the authors stress the importance of students studying their own locality. Vic (line 130-34) exemplifies the value of the local context, as follows:

*If I am in Newcastle or teaching in Carlisle or in Anglesey, probably the concepts would be much the same, but the places that I chose to try and work with students to help and get an understanding of those places would be slightly different.*

Studying local places also provides the opportunity for contextual learning where students carry out fieldwork and explore familiar, everyday places. As Jem points out ‘it is difficult to write about local places in a textbook’ (line 034), further suggesting (line 350-2):

*Teachers might want to use maps, local resources and local places when exploring the key concepts of place. Ideas about place identity, attachment and our shared sense of place are far better to understand when we explore familiar places.*

Several authors note that such opportunities can be overlooked by teachers who instead prefer to visit more distant locations, when curriculum time is provided for learning beyond the school gates. By exploring the local area, Rebus (line 352) suggests that students can encounter routes beyond the familiar and push the boundaries of their own place knowledge. The local area is also a far richer source of subject content than textbooks or other educational resources as it is concrete, real and experienced (Jem, line 350). Students can interrogate Census data (Rebus, line 354), develop map skills (Linda, line 286) and explore local museums and art galleries to view informal representations of their place in a familiar setting (Paul, line 218; Jem, line 354). With the A level being an English qualification, authors have particular go-to examples in the UK (Rebus line 039), they can then search further afield for contrasting examples. Olly (line 36) justifies using places in the UK for reasons of fieldwork possibilities. He notes that ‘textbooks are as much for teachers as they are for students, so it is about saying, here is a possibility, there is a possibility’ (line 076-7). Fieldwork can be embedded in the students’ geography, rather than being a bolt-on extra (Sam, line 152) and exploring the local through a geographical lens can help students to develop their own sense of place and put down their own roots in place (Linda, line 263; Tuan, 1974).

In the questionnaire, authors were asked why it is/is not important for students to have a good geographical understanding of their own locality. Their responses are presented in Table 29 and reveal how studying the local is important for students, geography and society. Authors think that local places are the reference point for students’ lived experience. Memories are made in place, they are the setting for personal geographies and are therefore memorable. In terms of geography, local places are easily accessible and can provide opportunities for a depth of understanding, building on a student’s own knowledge, which is not always possible with more distant places. Furthermore, by understanding more about the economic, political or environmental aspects of local places, students can become active members of their community and gain awareness of societal issues by getting involved in local events, activities and even grassroots activism.

Table 29 Why studying the local is important for students, geography and society

Student	Geography	Society
<p><b>Linda</b> - significant and memorable.</p> <p><b>Rebus</b> - serves to encourage a sense of 'belonging'.</p> <p><b>Jem</b> - helps students to understand the geography of more-distant places.</p> <p><b>Vic</b> - the starting point and reference point for all that students know and understand.</p> <p><b>Sam</b> - very important to have a sense of place.</p> <p><b>Paul</b> - this will support students' development as individuals.</p> <p><b>Ron</b> - To know about and understand the geography of the place they live. To use their personal geographies as a starting point to understand places.</p>	<p><b>Linda</b> - it offers the greatest opportunity for fieldwork, synthesising book-learnt knowledge and applying it.</p> <p><b>Rebus</b> - it is essential that students have a good geographical understanding of 'their place'.</p> <p><b>Olly</b> - see the local through the eyes of a geographer.</p> <p><b>Jem</b> - teachers often have a detailed understanding of the local, which is a rich source of information.</p> <p><b>Ash</b> - locality is the necessary corollary to the global and interconnected.</p> <p><b>Vic</b> - always teach about themes that affect and happen in other places – whereas their own locality may contain just as valuable a context for study.</p>	<p><b>Linda</b> - linked to civic pride.</p> <p><b>Rebus</b> – serves to encourage an awareness of local issues which, as the world's future decision-makers, we need them to engage with.</p> <p><b>Ash</b> - If you don't understand the local you can't make sense of Brexit and Trump - the defining issues of our time.</p> <p><b>Vic</b> - these are the places that, as adults, they will live in and will need to vote in – so any understanding of what their locality is about becomes essential.</p> <p><b>Paul</b> - enable students to engage in the life of their locality with greater authority - to make more informed decisions personally e.g. where to live and corporately e.g. as voters or as members of local groups.</p>

#### 5.4.2 *Distant places*

When selecting places, authors strive to achieve a balance between close-to-home and more distant places.

Table 30 Reasons to study local and distant places

Students' local area		Distant places
familiar sense of belonging close-by known easily accessible experts in own lived experience		unfamiliar perception of 'far-away' distinctly different unknown less accessible without experience

During interview, all the authors discuss why certain places are studied. Of the places 'students just ought to know about' (Olly, line 050), some are fixed by the specification, others are freely-selected by authors. All the authors mention selecting places with a 'wow' factor, Vic uses the examples of Zion Canyon and New York in the United States, simply because geography is about finding out about the amazing world we live in. He suggests in his questionnaire response that studying distant places 'can help us to see and understand our place in the world – within a human or a physical system, developing our responsibility to look after resources and care for the planet'. All the authors discuss selecting places with global reach, such as economic hubs. Ash notes that world cities are 'locus of decision making that affects citizens and outcomes for people, nationally and globally'. According to the authors, places which are unique are also worthy of study, especially those with distinct landscapes, abundant biodiversity, extreme demography, rich culture and so on. For Jem, this can be exemplified by isolated places such as the Amazon and Arctic which threatened by environmental devastation and climate change. The questionnaire data (Table 30) highlights that it is important to study distant places for a number of reasons: to broaden students' horizons, provide a sense of awe and wonder (Linda, Rebus, Vic, Ron), understand the variety and range of environments (Linda, Olly), explore sameness, differences and connections with other people and places (Linda, Rebus, Ash, Vic, Sam, Ron) and challenge stereotypes and destructive ideas such as othering, racism and segregation (Linda, Ash, Vic, Paul).

### 5.5 Theme 3: The world is diverse and changing

The themes in this section focus on the diverse and changing nature of places and include the micro-themes 'Comparing and contrasting places', 'Extreme and representative places' and 'Changing places'.

### 5.5.1 *Comparing and contrasting places*

Two decades ago, Waugh (1998) the author of the first comprehensive A level textbook *Geography: An Integrated Approach*, helped to define Japan and Kenya as the archetypal more and less developed country comparisons (Vic, line 257), but the dualism was reductive. The authors in this study agree that it is important to choose places that break down rather than support these binaries, see the earlier discussion in Section 5.3.1. The use of the BRIC and MINT country acronyms, introduced in Section 4.2.1, can help to break down binaries and shine a light on a much wider range of countries, raising awareness of the diversity of places which have the potential to illustrate different geographical themes. From the interview data, authors reveal how difficult it is to compare and contrast places which are too dissimilar. One author tries to compare the Docklands in London with the Great Orme in Wales, but finds that the once industrial heartland is quite different to the remote rural area in terms of scale, landscapes, politics, economies and cultures.

While discussing which place to compare with Leeds (UK) for use in a textbook, Sam recalls initially selecting Lagos in Nigeria (line 035). In discussion with an academic geographer, he realises that he should not compare a capital city with a regional one and a better choice would be Roario in Argentina (line 037). Vic and Paul also talk of places that are incomparable. Vic suggests that Sydney rather than Birmingham is a suitable city to compare with London (line 227) and Paul talks of comparing Lympstone in Devon with Toxteth in Liverpool as their scale is similar (line 67-70). These examples suggest that authors think about and have to briefly research places in order to confirm whether they are suitable for comparative studies. They also need to think about issues of scale, power, reach and urban hierarchy when selecting and writing about places.

In order to provide some balance to the two sizeable place case studies used in the Changing Places unit, Ash and Paul suggest using a number of diverse place exemplars within their writing. Their hope is that students will recognise some of the characteristics of their local environment in these examples. Paul recalls how he would tell his students not to write more than three lines in an essay without including an example and he tries to follow this rule in his own writing (line 502). Ash follows a similar rule and vents his frustration about the waste of

space he sees in other peoples' textbooks where long case studies are cut and pasted, with 'marginal relevance' to the specification in question (line 190). With a focus on two detailed case studies in the Changing Places unit (DfE, 2014a), it is important that authors do not waste any available space as this can reduce the total number of places presented and is problematic when aiming to provide a broad and balanced view of the world.

### 5.5.2 *Extreme or representative places*

Authors are concerned with why particular places are selected. This theme picks up issues associated with typical and atypical case studies. When writing about certain geography topics, an author's choice can be limited. For example, the UK is located away from plate margins, in the mid-latitudes, and is unlikely to be affected by tectonic disasters, tropical storms or extremely hot or cold conditions. Therefore, cold environment examples generally come from distant places located at high latitudes or high altitudes such as Antarctica or the Himalayas. Ron suggests that the Himalayan mountain range is an 'exciting place' (line 036), a 'more interesting' (line 051) cold environment than the Alps, as they are home to the tallest mountain in the world. This is an example of extreme or atypical geography which has the potential to distort the subject.

When discussing the scale and significance of London, Ash recalls how the value of property in Chelsea is equal to the value of all property in Wales. Such a clear analogy can capture the imagination of students who 'like ownership over tiny little facts' (Ash, line 162). On a settlement hierarchy, London is at one extreme and remote rural places such as the Great Orme, where a farm recently sold for a pound, are at the other (Jem, line 207). Representing exceptional or extreme places like these in a textbook is not a problem, unless several authors use the same method for selecting places then textbooks could end up resembling the *Guinness World Records* book, with entries such as the most populous and most wealthy places in the world. To ensure a textbook chapter represents the lived experience of A level students, more typical case studies and places should be included. Interestingly, Ash and Olly rebut such a claim, seeing the importance of students knowing some key national metrics or bookend facts such as the fastest eroding coast, most populous city and number of people at risk of a storm surge in the capital (Olly, line 032; Ash, line 096). Unlike thematic case studies, Olly

suggests that locational case studies are more representative of everyday places (line 104) and Jem suggests that educators have an ethical duty to include everyday places in school geography (line 053).

### **5.5.3 *Changing places***

In legacy A level examination specifications, there was a requirement that case studies could only come from the contemporary timescale from the last 30 years. This requirement has been removed from the 2016 A level Geography specifications. Four of the authors were pleased about this change. Paul comments ‘if we are not careful, we will miss out on giving [students] a moderate understanding of what has happened in the past which nevertheless reverberates through time to today’ (line 167-9). Paul uses the 1953 storm surge and flooding of low-lying North Sea coastlines as exemplification because of its impact on policy. ‘You have only got to go to the Netherlands and see what the billions have been spent on the Rhine Delta project and other projects and most of it comes from that point in time’ (line 170-3). These punctuation points carry on influencing society long afterwards, as Paul suggests ‘you cannot understand the characteristics of a place, simply by looking at today’ (line 174-6). This makes geographical sense and ties in with the idea that connections from the past affect places in the present.

Places reflect the society which make and re-make them; they are constantly in flux. Rebus, Sam and Paul suggest that the past is the key to the present. Rebus refers to this implicitly when she talks about the importance of the research and development industry in the M4 Corridor, Britain’s own Silicon Valley, which stuck in her memory from her own school education. Interestingly, she does not see the contemporary science parks associated with prestigious universities, such as Cambridge, in the same way. In other words, the M4 Corridor was the first of many places in the UK built specifically for the research and development industry, a punctuation point which shifted our way of thinking about industrial sectors. Political and economic decisions can have far-reaching consequences to people living in particular places (Paul, line 574). Olly and Jem note that Stratford and the Docklands in East London have both been over-represented in textbooks. These are significant examples of rapidly changing places in the UK, where economic decline has been followed fairly swiftly by

government-funded regeneration. Textbooks emphasise change in place, often by comparing the neglect and abandonment of the past, with the dramatic improvement brought by investment. Sam picks up on the changing nature of the area around Sheffield because of the closure of the steel industry. He describes a city which ‘has undergone a metamorphosis’ (line 114). Such a transition makes teaching about ‘the steel city’ difficult, when young people have no experience of it for themselves. When discussing the Rust Belt in the United States, another area which has seen a rapid decline in heavy industry, both Vic and Linda turn to films, books and other media to paint a picture of place in the mind of students. A geographical imagination can help students understand what places, past and distant, are like if they are unable to experience them directly. This was further discussed in Section 5.4.2.

The interviews with authors took place between May 2016 and February 2017. The socio-cultural context of this point in time was one of significant change. The British electorate voted to withdraw from the European Union on 23 June 2016 and Donald Trump entered and won the United States presidential election race in November 2016. Geopolitics significantly impacts on the authors’ thinking about connections between countries and the UK’s future identity outside the European Union. As Paul (line 449-51) reflects:

*If I was in class, I think I would set up a joint debate with the politics department about Scottish Independence. That homeland. What is it like? Can we understand why the Scottish are feeling how they are at the moment and what might happen post-Brexit?*

Authors writing in 2016 might have seen Brexit as a great focus for classroom discussions, but not so great a focus for a textbook, considering the significant changes likely to accompany the UK’s departure from the European Union. This real-world situation provides a parallel to the problems of topicality and obsolescence which authors have to deal with. It is problematic for textbooks to include a contemporary issue such as Brexit, as the socio-cultural context of textbook production can change quickly and printed text can rapidly become out-of-date. All the authors suggest avoiding writing about places where change is rapid or the outcome of processes such as placemaking and redevelopment are

still in process, As Sam suggests, there is no point mentioning certain developments ‘because in two years’ time it would not be relevant’ (line 225). Maintaining case study longevity can extend the shelf-life of a textbook. Although, obsolescence of textbook information can be mitigated with digital updates, but this does not always make economic sense for books in print (Harwood, 2014).

## **5.6 Discussion of the overarching theme ‘know-where’**

The themes already presented in this chapter which focus on the selection and representation of place will now be discussed one theme at a time starting with defining and understanding place.

### **5.6.1 *Defining and understanding place***

Authors hold a wide range of views about place. Their perspectives reflect different experiences, attitudes and interests. Previous studies on geographical perspectives (Catling, 2004; Walford, 1996; Barratt Hacking, 1996; Martin, 2000) were designed to engage prospective teachers in understanding their own views ‘so that they might teach the subject more effectively’ (Catling, 2004, p.157). The geographical perspectives of the authors in this study are diverse, although there is some commonality. Placeist perspectives are most significant here, yet not so well represented in Catling’s (2004) study. He found that globalists were the most significant group, closely followed by placeists and environmentalists.

ALCAB introduce a placeist perspective in the core A level subject content for Changing Places with a strong emphasis on place meanings and representations (Evans, 2014; DfE, 2014a). This redresses the balance with the Interactionists perspective which had come to dominate the synoptic structure of legacy specifications. Non-core A level subject content, written by assessment organisations, still has an interactionist perspective with a focus on human-environment interactions (AQA, 2016; Edexcel, 2016). Spaceist perspectives dominate sub-disciplinary thinking attentive to spatial thinking, global interconnections and geographical information systems (Jo and Bednarz, 2009; Massey, 2005). From questionnaire and interview data, it would seem that an author’s epistemic position is guided by their preconceived conceptual framework to a greater extent than the current curriculum framework. The findings of this

study contrast with those of Barratt Hacking (1996) and Martin (2000), who both found that trainee teachers suspend their own image of geography in their planning and teaching. This may represent the limited situational perception of novice teachers rather than anything else (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986).

The Q-sort activity highlights the diversity of geographic perspectives authors hold about place. Furthermore, where similar views are held by different authors, the reasons for these views can also be diverse. It can be concluded from the Q-sort that authors prioritise statements about key concepts, which are ‘particularly important or useful’ (Taylor, 2008, p.50) and form ‘the ‘grammar’ of geography that we use to make sense of the world’ (Brooks, 2018, p.107). This reveals something of the way authors think about the nature and structure of knowledge when considering subject content. Two of the authors initially worked outside the Q-sort grid, this ‘act of sabotage’, as Ash (line 369) describes it, highlights the adaptive expertise and implicit desire of authors to think beyond the rules of my research method, while responding to the enquiry at hand.

Five of the authors perceive the repositioning of place as a central organisational concept in the 2014 A level subject content (DfE, 2014a) as a positive curriculum development, dispelling Major’s (2010) concern that there was little space in the curriculum for place as a concept. This was not necessarily because they agreed that place should be taught as a discrete unit, but rather that it allowed a light to shine on geography’s ‘most important’ concept (Cresswell, 2014, p.1). This aligns with a number of academic geographers who have made the case for place (Agnew, 1987; Anderson, 2015; Cresswell, 2014). The formation of ALCAB reconnected academic geographers with the A level qualification and assessment system and all the authors in this study were appreciative of guidance which reflects contemporary disciplinary thinking.

As outlined in Table 4 (Section 2.2.10), descriptive geography, social constructionism and phenomenology are three approaches to the study of place (Rawling, 2011). However, the authors in this study do not frame their understanding of place following these approaches. Instead, they perceive the complexity and subjectivity of place, building on a conceptualisation of place as locational knowledge and a backdrop to the events and experiences of people. This closely aligns with the conceptualisation of place in the new A level subject

content. Therefore, it can be argued that place is a threshold concept (Meyer and Land, 2003, p.1) which is ‘conceptually difficult’ and needs to be viewed in a new way to be fully understood. All the authors are concerned that teachers, especially those without a human geography degree, would panic about how to teach the new A level Changing Places unit. Certain concepts such as location and national identity are more concrete and easier to understand than abstract concepts such as a place identity or place itself. A level students do struggle with these concepts because they are not able to master such subjective, abstract thinking which is arguably more effortful when the concept has been relocated from the parent discipline in which it was initially theorised (Bonnett, 2008; Roberts, 2013; Young, 2011a). For example, the way individuals define themselves in relation to place and develop a person-place relationship which connects who we are to where we belong is deeply personal and subjective (Casey, 2001; Anderson, 2015). The authors in this study are all aware that they need to select familiar case studies to exemplify abstract concepts. These choices are again evidence of prolonged classroom practice and a deep understanding of the teaching and learning processes.

### **5.6.2 *Distribution of places***

According to the authors in this study, there is a strong UK focus for the Changing Places core unit. In Hopkin’s (1998; 2001, p.58) research of the world according to geography textbooks, a resource with a strong UK focus is created ‘at the expense of a wider global coverage, especially of the South’. This is evident by the limited number of countries listed in the A level Geography subject content (DfE, 2014a, p.10) as follows:

*By starting study from the local place within which students live or study and at least one further contrasting place through which to develop the required knowledge and understanding. Study must involve moving out from the local place to encompass regional, national, international and global scales in order to understand the dynamics of place.*

As suggested by the authors, a strong UK focus has certain benefits for teachers and students. Places presented in textbooks can be used as fieldwork destinations, to connect classroom learning with fieldwork experiences. Ordnance Survey and

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping via online mapping services such as *ESRI ArcGIS Online for Schools* can be used while in the field and students are more likely to have visited places such as London and Manchester compared to more distant, international case studies. Yet, a strong UK focus can reduce the opportunity to study other places. Most countries in all other continents are under-represented (see Figure 29 to 33). For example, in one of the five *Changing Places* textbook chapters, Tahrir Square in Cairo is the only place used to represent Africa and Medellin in Colombia is the only place used to represent South America. This can result in a single story of place (Adichie, 2009), with Africa being represented by conflict and South America a place of drugs, high crime rates and gang violence (Skinner *et al.*, 2016, p.340-8). Even worse, as is the case in two of the *Changing Places* chapters, there is absolutely no coverage of the global south. The use of Scoffham's (2013) dimensions of place typology (local-to-global, past-to-future and physical setting-to-abstract) could be a useful tool to ensure coverage of a wider range of places in future textbook editions.

This study highlights the dichotomy between authors' intentions and published texts influenced by publishing constraints. Authors aim to provide a balance of case studies, which are well-distributed and present some of the diversity of people and places worldwide. Constraints reduce author agency. For example, the A level subject content (DfE, 2014a) requires only the local place and a contrasting place to be studied, this has clearly resulted in a limited coverage of international places, as seen in the *Changing Places* chapters of five A level textbooks. This situation is not a new one, as Waugh (2000, p.100) explains:

*Teachers, examination boards, publishers, authors, geography advisors and Ofsted officials all seem to agree that many geography textbooks contain insufficient case studies and that these are also often too short and over-simplified.*

In an increasingly interconnected world, providing a limited view of other countries seems slightly at odds with a discipline which is increasingly progressive, global and outward-facing (Cresswell, 2014). Although, it must be remembered that *Changing Places* is only one of four core units, the second

human geography unit being *Global systems and global governance*, where other places are included for study.

With an awareness of the issues of UK-centricity and othering (Said, 1978), the authors in this study focus on writing about place meanings and representations, rather than direct comparisons of places. This approach to studying place follows ALCAB guidance (Evans, 2014). It allows the differences between places to be positively represented, as opposed to difference being ‘defined by lacking, absence and negativities’, while respecting the other ‘without being threatened by difference’ (Picton, 2008, p.246; Taylor, 2017, p.700). ALCAB’s approach has moved school geography away from the once-dominant positivist, ethnocentric paradigm (Winter, 1996) and better reflects the multi-paradigmatic discipline of geography. The revised A level subject content (DfE, 2014a) also allows the development of a Thirdspace (Soja, 1986) approach to place and data, where a variety of qualitative and quantitative data is used to build a picture of place (Biesta, 2017). This can help to avoid and challenge negative stereotypes which appear in the media and sometimes in poorly-designed resources (Holloway and Valentine, 2000).

### **5.6.3 *Choosing places***

In research on distant places, Taylor (2017, p.683) questions whether the ‘mediation devices of comparison, contrast and narratives of change’ commonly employed in school textbooks are inherently othering. While discussing othering and the imagined country, Morgan (2003b, p.445) argues that geography teaching through curriculum centralisation is ‘linked to attempts to make it serve the needs of the nation-state’. He draws on the writing of Hall (1990) to suggest a link between subject content and national ideology. It is difficult to dismiss this idea. Although aware of particular agendas and the politicisation of the curriculum, the authors in this study focus on more pressing matters such as specification coverage, conceptual framing and writing with confidence. Writing just after the European Union Referendum, authors in this study have stayed away from national and European politics, with a concern not to put into print a situation that could rapidly change and cause publications to quickly date.

Authors show a preference for writing about places they are familiar with rather than places experienced briefly as tourists or places left unvisited. This is also a theme in Tuan's (1974, p.63) writing, as follows:

*Only the visitor (and particularly the tourist) has a viewpoint; his perception is often a matter of using his eyes to compose pictures. The native, by contrast, has a complex attitude derived from his immersion in the totality of his environment. The visitor's viewpoint, being simple, is easily stated. The complex attitude of the native, on the other hand, can be expressed by him only with difficulty and indirectly through behaviour, local tradition, lore, and myth.*

Writing about a familiar place gives authors confidence and provides them with connections to local people, locational knowledge and a rich understanding. The authors agree that local places should be studied, as they resonate with geography students. It is their geography. This aligns with Ranger's (1995, p.67) suggestion that 'a geography curriculum should help pupils to understand the world and their place in it' and with Waugh (2000, p.104) who wants students 'to feel that the book has been specially written for them'. Unfortunately, it is impossible to include everyone's local place in a textbook. The local can at least be the focus of textbook activities, such as these example from the 2016 textbooks:

*'Research how regeneration projects in your nearest urban area (a) maintained its character, (b) changed its character, (c) been most successful.'*

(Digby, 2016, p.231)

*'Is there a place close to you that has been given a new name or image? Find out why.'*

(Ross *et al.*, 2016. p.89)

When dealing with issues of place selection, authors in this study are seen to use their professional judgement and are quite aware of the limitations of the textbook

‘as curriculum’ (Lee and Catling, 2016b, p.50). They expect teachers to make their own pedagogic decisions about the most appropriate places for their students to study when they adopt pedagogic texts. By using activities with a focus on local places, authors provide a clear pedagogical steer to teachers and students as to how to approach teaching and learning about place.

#### **5.6.4 *The world is diverse and changing***

With insufficient space and a world from which to choose, the way authors represent the world in a textbook will only ever be a partial view (Waugh, 2000; Hopkin, 2001; Massey, 2006). The most significant factor influencing place selection, beyond the specification, appears to be the experience of the authors. This accords with Freeman’s (2008) research, which concludes that the experience and worldview of an author guides how the world is represented to the textbook reader and is more influential than other factors such as curriculum content and publisher’s interests. Roberts (2006) advocates writing about experienced places, due to the benefits of using first-hand accounts over vicarious sources. This can reduce the number of possible solutions, supporting Schwartz’s (2004) paradox of choice, whereby too many choice can result in frustration and uncertainty.

Selecting places for inclusion in a textbook requires careful consideration. Metacognition of the purpose of a place case study is possibly the first issue an author needs to address. For example, following a risk paradigm, Bangladesh, Tuvalu and the Netherlands are obvious choices to illustrate sea level rise as they are low-lying. China is the most obvious choice for a case study on state-enforced population policy due to the national One-Child Policy (1979-2015). These most obvious or extreme examples can become over-represented and cause stereotypes and ethnocentric bias if certain people and places are included and others excluded from a textbook, reinforcing ideas of otherness (Taylor, 2004; Winter, 1997a and 1997b; Said, 1978). Authors feel duty-bound to carefully select places. However, they are influenced by formal policy, publishing guidance and more widely by the society in which they write. It is easy to see how A level geography students can have a skewed view of the world and normalise catastrophe and extreme geographies. Furthermore, if extreme places and case studies are always chosen, then a whole set of places will never be studied at A level. The Himalayas would

be selected over the Caucasus Mountains to represent high altitude landscapes and India and China would be selected over Indonesia and Pakistan in terms of populous countries. Yet these alternative places have intrinsic value and just as much merit to be the focus for study, even if they are not the extreme.

Some of the authors suggest, as Lyell (1830-3) did before them, that the past is the key to the present, that only by understanding historical geography, can we unlock our understanding of the present. Taylor (2017, p.687) reminds us that ‘textbooks are not produced or used in a vacuum, so it is important to bear in mind the socio-cultural context of the textbooks including trends in geography teaching, geo-political and educational change’. Places ‘of their time’ such as the M4 Corridor and Manor Top in Sheffield are a result of the society which constructed them, changing technology and political or financial decisions made by the powerful (Castells, 2000). Significant events such as natural disasters, industrial change and political shifts are punctuation points which can change the course of history (Counsell, 2004). Bringing these ideas together, the choice of case studies authors make can support students not just to understand geographical processes taking place today, but to understand the processes of the past which helped to construct our contemporary landscape.

## **5.7 Summary**

The research findings and discussion presented in Chapter Five provide an understanding of the process of place selection and representation, as experienced by textbook authors. Place selection is not a neutral activity. Authors agree that they are influenced by a range of institutions including the government, assessment organisations and publishing houses who provide subject content guidance and steers. Authors are also influenced by society, the media, their experience, the parent discipline, communities of practice and global, political and moral agendas. Authors agree that they select places for different purposes, to exemplify thematic content, geographical concepts or theories and different types of location or country. With the new core content, authors were pleased that two places are selected for study in greater depth. However, they might make different place selections compared to teachers. Authors are more likely to select globally significant places such as London which will resonate with students or

geographically significant or extreme places to be used as bookend facts. There is evidence that authors make ethically sound judgements when providing a voice for people and places that ought to be studied at A level, whether they are on the curriculum or not. This situated understanding (Winch *et al.*, 2015) is important when telling ‘stories about places’ (Morgan, 2003b, p.458). Drawing on Schwartz’s (2004) paradox of choice, it would seem that authors have a vision of what they want a case study about place to look like and achieve, but these place choices are not fixed. Emerging from the questionnaire and interview data are a number of enquiry questions which help narrow and guide an author’s choice, for example:

- What should students know about different places to develop a good world map for geographical, citizenship or educational reasons?
- How can links to a student’s own local place be made?
- What source of knowledge about place is being utilised?
- How do we move away from the LEDC/MEDC paradigm and concept of othering?
- How can the single story of place be avoided to challenge and reduce stereotypes and bias?
- Within a people-environment interaction paradigm, which places have the greatest population affected by a particular issue?
- When an abstract concept is being studied, which familiar or relatable places can be used to exemplify it?
- Is diversity within and between places being presented?
- How can the connections and flows of people, culture, finance between places be explored?
- Is the place rapidly changing and therefore become quickly out-of-date if represented in a textbook?
- Are places selected representative or extreme examples of place?
- Whose guidance is influencing place selection?

These enquiry questions or rules are rarely verbalised. However, by asking authors to select a range of significant places in the questionnaire and justify their

choices at interview, a rich understanding of their decision-making has been developed in this chapter. Authors show concern that any selection can potentially skew a student's view of the world. This is realised in the Changing Places chapters of five A level Geography textbooks which reveal a partial view of the world, suggesting that authors prioritise writing about contemporary, relevant, globally important places and those named in the specification before thinking about challenging assumptions, stereotypes and bias.

Having explored how authors select and represent place in an A level geography textbook, the next chapter presents data findings and a discussion focusing on the individuals, groups and communities who inspire authors. Such 'know-who' is important if we want to better understand the source of shared geographical knowledge used in A level Geography textbooks.

## **6 Who in the community of practice inspires and supports authors?**

The findings for this research question focus on the individuals, groups and communities who have inspired authors during their education and professional roles as geography educators and are grouped under the overarching theme ‘know-who’. Using the words of authors taken directly from the interview transcripts, a narrative for the theme ‘know-who’ is presented in Appendix D.

### **6.1 Introduction to the overarching theme ‘know-who’**

The overarching theme ‘know-who’ recognises that knowledge is not created in a silo, rather in collaboration with others and authors draw on this social capital when writing a textbook. The sub-themes recognise the influence of others at three scales from single people, small groups and larger professional communities. The sub-themes are called ‘Influential geographers’, ‘Developing expertise together’ and ‘Communities of practice’. There is some overlap between the three sub-themes, although the scale and nature of relationships in each theme is different. The first sub-theme looks to the individuals who have influenced the authors, these include academics, professional geographers and others with inspirational stories. The second sub-theme relates to people who have collaborated with the authors during their education, teaching and research often at a department or school scale and the final sub-theme relates to the broader communities of practice to which authors belong. These themes are presented in Table 31. The findings are presented in turn, followed by a combined discussion and concluding remarks.

Table 31 Themes identified under the overarching theme ‘know-who’

Sub-themes	Linda	Olly	Rebus	Jem	Ash	Vic	Sam	Paul	Ron
Theme 1: Influential geographers (singular)									
Academic writing									
Academics									
Ethnographic research									
Professionals in field									
Other people									
Theme 2: Developing expertise together (collaborators)									
Own university educ.									
Own geography dept.									
Own research									
ALCAB									
Theme 3: Communities of practice (groups)									
Subject Association									
Learned society									
Key:									
Detailed discussion									
Some discussion									

## 6.2 Theme 1: A lifetime of inspiration: influential geographers

All the authors in this study name individual geographers and geography educators who influence their way of thinking after reading their research, listening to them lecture or working alongside them either as a student or educator (Table 32).

Table 32 Influential others - academics

Academic geographers	Geography educators
Doreen Massey	Mick Naish
Linda McDowell	Rex Walford
Danny Dorling	Liz Taylor
Yi Fu Tuan	David Waugh
David Harvey	Eleanor Rawling
Manuel Castells	Margaret Roberts

Inspirational geographers named by the authors include academics, particularly those who connect with teachers by lecturing and writing for the geography education community. Authors name several academics whose work they have

read including Harvey (1973, 1996), Tuan (1974, 1977) and Castells (2000). Massey is named by most authors, a result of her intellect, enthusiasm, keynote lecture at the Geographical Association annual conference and seminal work on space and place (Massey, 1991, 2005). Geography educators named by the authors include Liz Taylor, Margaret Roberts and Eleanor Rawling. Vic (line 063-6) recalls listening to a lecture from Eleanor Rawling about representing real life in Mumbai, as follows:

*She did not deal with generalisations, oh you know they live in poor places and there are no drains and there is no drinking water, you can reel that stuff off forever, she made it very focused, about real people's lives.*

This lecture influenced Vic's approach to writing about place and the power relations that affect people in their everyday lives. Inspiration seems particularly powerful when individuals have crossed the school-university boundary, bringing an informed, but different perspective into view. Vic is the most vociferous of all the authors, recalling how people like Mick Naish and Eleanor Rawling 'opened up my mind about what geography ought to be about, in a way that has never left me' (line 088-91). Such emotive language suggests that it is almost impossible to put into words the extent to which certain individuals can inspire their peers. Several of the authors also suggest that the people influencing their thinking are not only geographers. Linda notes how friends and family gave steers for her writing and Vic mentions a number of sociologists who inspired him.

### **6.3 Theme 2: Developing expertise together**

This theme focuses on people who have collaborated with authors, through education, teaching or even research partnerships. These experiences leave the authors with a sense of achievement, pride and professional growth, which may not have been possible otherwise. Several of the authors reflect on their undergraduate experiences and discuss the academic departments that supported their education. Paul suggests that the human geography methods he learnt while at university are still relevant today. For Vic, it is about being introduced to writers, academics and new ways of thinking. Rebus concurs with this and

suggests that her own education improved her research skills and critical perspective; recognising that these are key attributes of a textbook author. Two authors talk about the influence of their school geography department colleagues. Successful departments being a seed-bed for some of the authors, in terms of driving forward developments and projects in school geography. Paul describes his colleagues as his inspiration and recalls ‘there are a few of us that were called the legends and we just sparked off each other - there was a diversity and it was amazing’ (line 514-5). In a similar vein, Sam talks about a range of inspirational others, including professional geographers, who provide geographical resources or links with different places through their professional practice which he would then use in the classroom.

Working together with departmental colleagues or with professional geographers is a key aspect of teacher development, as new ideas, resources or connections are integrated into teaching and learning. These connections are invaluable, as they reduce the relative isolation teachers and authors can feel, working for much of the time in classrooms and home offices away from their peers. The creation of ALCAB meant connecting knowers and knowledge across the university-school divide or rather academics and academic geography with teachers, textbook authors and the school subject. According to three of the authors, a key concern about ALCAB was the balance of members, with only one geography teacher represented on the panel. One author would have preferred this teacher to be a human geographer rather than a geologist. Without a significant or relevant teacher voice at its heart, a couple of authors criticised ALCAB for creating content ‘for’ and not ‘with’ A level educators. This power imbalance and lack of reciprocity is an issue for Paul (line 652-6). He states:

*If only ALCAB had asked a few of us that had been around for a bit, gone to the three assessment organisations and say give me one person and the ALCAB chairman had just got us along to one of the sessions so we could have talked to them and saying could you just alter the language here and you would find that colleagues would embrace this, much more readily, but anyway, that was not to be.*

Paul suggests that ‘more secondary teachers or people who are actively involved in the A level’ (line 696) could help to mediate subject content choice and the language of academics, drawing on their own knowledge of A level students and how they learn.

#### **6.4 Theme 3: Communities of practices**

This theme encompasses the wider activities associated with universities, learned societies and subject associations, which provide the opportunities for connections and networks to develop with other professionals. Activities include conferences, professional development events, research partnerships with academic geography departments (Jem, line 303; Sam, line 370; Paul, line 027; Ron, line 075) and links with real-world geographers (Linda, line 107; Sam, line 368; Paul, line 027). Three of the authors suggest that richer connections with the discipline are forged when authors are involved in teacher training, sabbatical activities or higher education; where attendance is frequent or the type of activities involve collaborative learning, critical thinking and reflection. These activities are all educational and support lifelong learning.

All of the authors discuss having an affiliation with particular communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). With one exception, all the authors are members of the Geographical Association and the Royal Geographical Society (RGS-IBG). Several authors have Chartered Geographer status with RGS-IBG, which is the only professional accreditation for geographers. All the authors are experienced classroom practitioners with additional experience as teacher trainers, educational resource writers and as examiners, several in senior roles. When examining, authors work with the words of students, they assess candidates’ ideas and knowledge and provide feedback on individual assessments via Examiner Reports. Textbook authors work across sectors, interpreting the formal curriculum while selecting disciplinary and everyday knowledge from society, while intuitively ‘knowing’ (Goodson, 1983) how to make this knowledge accessible for A level students. In addition to being active members of several communities of practice, all the authors volunteer their time and expertise through committee activities, teacher training and conference organisation and participation. Authors also value the insights and critical

reflections provided by their peers. Jem notes that conference presenters can ‘provide frameworks for thinking about the school subject, touching on a broad range of subjects including geographical enquiry, criticality and the purpose of data skills’ (line 309-11). Assessment organisations are another professional learning community, providing training events for teachers and networking events for assessment experts, focusing on teaching for assessment rather than teaching for learning.

Influential others constitute a broad group of people, including teachers, authors, academics and geography educators, with whom authors can make connections and draw on for support. All the authors perceive communities of practice to be important for their professional development; a space to share their practice and subject knowledge and test out new ideas and progress theory. Recalling the feeling of ‘writing blind’ (line 137) about the unit *Changing Places*, Linda describes the importance of reassurance from her editor, guidance provided by the RGS-IBG *Changing Places* article written by a member of ALCAB (Phillips, 2016) and validation of her ideas after attending a Geographical Association training event.

## **6.5 Discussion of the overarching theme ‘know-who’**

During interview, all the authors name academic geographers and geography educators who have been an inspiration during their education and career. Most of the academics are key thinkers in the discipline or individuals who spend time boundary-crossing between academic and school geography to disseminate research and collaborate on projects with educators. It is useful for authors to be aware of current disciplinary research, methods and language (Maton, 2014a), especially with ALCAB’s involvement in A level reform. The geography educators Taylor, Roberts and Rawling are named by authors, due to their research on aspects of geography, education and pedagogy. Taylor (2013a, 2013c, 2004) advances ideas about conceptions and representations of place, Roberts (2003, 2013) encourages an enquiry approach to geography and Rawling (2015, 2016) progresses research on the curriculum and pupil progression. Geography educators often work in university education departments and create new pedagogical knowledge which can support textbook pedagogy. Authors

recontextualise this disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge and create new subject content for A level textbooks. They then disseminate their work within different learning communities to reach a wider audience. Knowers and recontextualisers are as important as knowledge during times of curriculum reform as they can influence how teachers and students view and understand subject content. As Morgan (2013, p.274) notes ‘geographical knowledge does not innocently reflect the ‘real-world’ but instead reflects the subjective interests of geographers’.

Authors suggest that they are particularly inspired when they work closely with other professionals and geography is co-constructed. Developing expertise in this form is more memorable and examples of collaborative work are set in context of school geography departments, university education departments and research projects such as the Geographical Association’s Young People’s Geography (2006-11). In research discussing subject knowledge and teacher education, Ellis (2009, p.58-9) notes how ‘individual knowledge can be validated as knowledge according to the rules operated by the community of practice’. The authors in this study recognise and value this community role. The more experienced authors use conferences to test new pedagogical and substantive ideas with their peers, in the same way that teachers develop teaching and learning through practice with students in the classroom. These activities support the development of authors’ and teachers’ subject content and ‘geographical imaginations, which can influence their understanding of the subject’ (Brooks, 2011, p.171). Authors, just like teachers, improve when they collaborate, by ‘spreading best practice’ and ‘developing and disseminating innovative next practice’ (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012, p.137). Collaboration embraces esoteric and mundane knowledge, enables constructivist pedagogies and encourages a critical approach to geography education (Beck, 2013; Bernstein, 1990). Such co-construction of knowledge is a key aspect of geography enquiry and, as Roberts (2013) suggests, it involves the active involvement of the learner in the acquisition of knowledge.

Authors draw a great deal of inspiration from their communities of practice, valuing connections with academics, professional geographers, geography educators, examiners, learned societies and subject associations.

Rawling (2018c) suggests that events arranged by assessment organisations and subject associations are an essential channel for the dissemination of subject updates and practical knowledge (Goodson, 2003). In addition to writing a book chapter on Place in Geography aimed at geography educators, Rawling (2018c) went on to disseminate her thoughts about A level curriculum change in a professional journal article aimed at teachers. By writing in a range of books and journals and presenting at various events, communities of practice can support collaboration, networking and knowledgeability for the benefit of members. This is essential for authors particularly at times of curriculum change, when there is a phase of reflection, vision and planning (Schön, 1983; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Rawling, 2007), where knowledge is mediated for use in school geography.

Since the 2014 A level reform and the work of ALCAB (Evans, 2014), authors have observed an increase in academic involvement in teacher training events, resource writing and outreach to local schools. Collective agency has been exercised to establish and develop these professional networks. Although a school-university divide will always exist between the methods and content of academic and school geography, communication and ‘a better understanding of their differences’ is possible (Butt and Collins, 2018 p.267). Collins (2019) describes an ongoing partnership developed between academics, student teachers and school students based at the University of Birmingham which aims to co-create curriculum resources. She concludes that school-university engagement can contribute to the school curriculum and teacher training, supporting school students, teachers and academics to better understand what other geographers do and know. With expertise, research partnerships and connections in universities and schools, authors are well positioned to support academic and school geographers to bridge the school-university divide (Hill and Jones, 2010; Pykett and Smith, 2009). Authors are able to share their expertise with teachers about how place can be theorised and taught at A level via teaching journals, university subject update lectures, teacher training events and more informal teachers networks (Rawling, 2018a). RGS-IBG developed a series of concise A Level subject content overviews including one for Changing Places (Phillips, 2016), which was particularly well received. The Geographical Association expanded its Top Spec series to include books covering the four core A level units, including

one on Changing Places (Rawlings Smith *et al.*, 2016). A hope for the future is that the current momentum and collective agency for school-university engagement will continue to grow.

Although the message systems of the pedagogic device (Bernstein, 1990, 2000) are influenced by a number of educational agents, the most important of these in recent decades has been the assessment organisations. Historically, chief examiners and subject officers at assessment organisations were tasked with writing and assessing curriculum content and providing training events and resources to explain how knowledge should be transmitted (Puttick, 2015b). The authors in this study were pleased about the formation of ALCAB as power over A level subject content and assessment became more balanced between ALCAB and the assessment organisations. ALCAB was given ‘access to continuing advice about the ‘teachability’ of content proposals through the inclusion of a practising teacher on the panel’ (Evans, 2014, p.4), ensuring that their guidelines were evidence-based and tested through consultation and focus groups. Even so, some authors felt that ALCAB did not hold tacit knowledge of A level assessment and therefore their guidance was not fully informed and did not build on previous specification development. Furthermore, ALCAB only represented a few institutions. In her analysis of the impact of reform at the A level/Higher Education interface, Winter (2013, p.448) concludes that the specialisation of academics ‘seen in the small group of elite research departments’ could reduce the appeal of the subject for students not interested in studying the subject beyond A level. As such, it is quite difficult to distil the philosophical, methodological and substantive pluralism which characterises contemporary geography (Clifford and Valentine, 2010) into a suitable and teachable format appropriate for A level.

## **6.6 A different perspective – a view from an academic geographer**

To validate some of the comments made by authors, one last person, an academic geographer with experience of the school-university boundary, was interviewed for this study. The academic geographer discussed four key threads about A level reform, as follows:

1. Knowledge structures - ALCAB wanted to reflect different areas of the discipline ‘without privileging qualitative or quantitative work’. This point was noted by authors and was discussed in Section 5.6.2.
2. Topicality - A level subject content should reflect developments in the discipline. ‘The work on place comes from two particular areas of the discipline. One of those areas is what was called the new cultural geography, the other is much broader than that, it relates to a whole series of subfields of geography that are harder to pigeonhole, beginning with humanistic geography and then a feminist critique of that and for me Doreen Massey is the central figure for me in thinking about place’.
3. Progress - Ideas of place progress, just as other ideas do. ‘For GCSE place might be location and that might be enough, location at a particular scale, but at A level you can also think about meaning and interactions’, ‘so we knew it wasn’t as straightforward as the GCSE idea of place, but we also knew that that was the whole point of it’. Topicality and progress were both discussed by authors in relation to their understanding of place, see Section 5.2.
4. Connections - The A level reform process has ‘prompted some teachers to get in touch’ to improve their subject knowledge and provide the opportunity for their students to experience academic geography lectures and workshops.

These four strands helpfully validate the comments authors make about knowledge structures, topicality, progress (see Section 5.2 and 5.6.2) and university-school connections. Of relevance here is the last point about connections. Social media has made access to academics much easier over the last decade. Therefore, outreach does not always have to come from academics. It can be initiated by teachers, teacher trainers, learned societies and subject associations. Collaborative agency or a shared responsibility to provide a good geography education through outreach is high on the agenda of schools and universities. It is an ideal mechanism to encourage early interaction with academics and wider participation at university.

## 6.7 Summary

The research findings and discussion presented in Chapter Six suggest that authors are inspired by individuals, groups and the wider geography education community. Interactions with inspirational others tend to involve learning and working in school or university departments, on committees and interest groups in learned societies and subject associations and at conferences or events hosted by various communities of practice. Considering that authors cannot accumulate and retain knowledge about every facet of geography, pedagogy and assessment, their social capital is a key source of shared expertise and can support learning and professional development through collaboration and research partnerships. For example, authors should be *au fait* with new subject content and be able to define, challenge, negotiate and establish subject and specialised concepts suitable prior to including them in their writing. Communities of practice can be used as a sounding board for this new knowledge, helping to disseminate in the regulative discourse these new definitions while updating their own understanding and practice with revised subject content. To draw this strand together, it is good to hear that stronger connections are being made and (re)made between schools and universities, even with ALCAB being dissolved. The dissemination of ideas and research by academics to teachers and students is highly valued and provides a useful mechanism for the transformation of knowledge between the fields of production and recontextualisation. The way in which academics are able to employ less esoteric language and a more appropriate pitch for a teacher audience is an area of research which has potential for further exploration.

Having explored the individuals, groups and communities who have inspired authors, the next chapter focuses on the characteristics of author expertise and how their practical knowledge or ‘know-how’ is used to overcome constraints, while structuring subject content for inclusion in a textbook.

## 7 How do textbook authors employ their tacit knowledge and decisional capital while writing?

The findings for this research question are grouped under the overarching theme ‘know-how’. It focuses on the tacit knowledge and decisional capital authors need to make appropriate choices about A level geography content and deal with constraints while writing a textbook. Using the words of authors from interview transcripts, a narrative for the theme ‘know-how’ is presented in Appendix D.

### 7.1 Introducing the overarching theme ‘know-how’

How textbook authors employ their tacit knowledge and decisional capital while writing is discussed within the overarching theme ‘know-how’. This theme recognises the characteristics of author expertise and how an author’s practical knowledge is used to overcome constraints in the writing process, while structuring subject content for inclusion in a textbook. Within the overarching theme, the following three sub-themes were formed: ‘Recognising professional expertise’, ‘Working within constraints’ and ‘Geography matters: conceptually framing the subject’. The first sub-theme relates to the key aspects of professional expertise. The second sub-theme sets out the key constraints faced by authors when writing an A level geography textbook and the final sub-theme focuses on subject-specific opportunities to add value to textbook content. Table 33 shows the sub-themes and associated micro-themes. The findings will be presented in turn, followed by a combined discussion and concluding remarks.

Table 33 Themes identified under the overarching theme ‘know-how’

<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Micro-themes</b>
Recognising professional expertise	A deep subject knowledge Reading around the subject A good researcher Awareness of own identity
Working within constraints	Specification order Fixed content Publisher’s guidance Time
Geography matters: conceptually framing the subject	Structuring writing within a conceptual frame Creativity and logicity like a jigsaw Good use of contemporary case studies

## 7.2 Theme 1: Recognising professional expertise

On the basis of the data collected, it can be suggested that authors recognise in themselves and others a range of attributes associated with being a good textbook writer. These themes are explored one by one, starting with a deep subject knowledge, followed by reading around the subject, a good researcher and awareness of own identity.

### 7.2.1 *A deep subject knowledge*

Textbook authors are expert practitioners with a deep subject knowledge. All the authors in this study suggest that their expertise is developed through a range of professional experiences, as teacher, examiners, teacher trainers and resource writers. Each role helps to broaden and deepen an author's knowledge and understanding of the geography taught in schools, the process of assessment and insights into student learning as well as their needs, conceptions and misconceptions. Jem (line 368-73) notes that:

*Expertise must start with plenty of classroom experience, but it is much more than that. A classroom teacher who has not taken on additional responsibilities outside the classroom may not be the best author. In my experience, teachers who also carry out assessment activities such as examining and moderating will have a far better understanding of the purpose of a textbook.*

Assessment expertise is vital, considering the centrality of assessment in defining the purpose of a textbook. When discussing fellow examiners and authors, Paul suggests that a good author 'needs to be someone who is a good classroom operative...who has used textbooks over the years' (line 626 and 630). This kind of exposure to a wide-range of textbooks helps authors to understand the achievable structures, styles and approaches textbooks can take. Teaching helps authors to be confident in their subject knowledge. Teachers develop this disciplinary subject content, pedagogy and pedagogic content knowledge with every lesson they plan for, teach and reflect upon. After teaching for 25 years, Sam describes how 'you sort of pick up information about places and soak it up and it stays' (line 218). With experience, authors develop expertise.

Writers also need to ‘write eloquently’ (Ash, line 296), ‘clearly and concisely’ (Rebus, line 476), be ‘fluent, ...knowledgeable and organised’ (Ron, line 205), in order to write in a way that people understand (Sam, line 338). Furthermore, as Ash (line 307-8) suggests, ‘the art of writing is hugely undervalued. These are books that kids need to want to read’. Writing therefore requires something more than subject expertise, authors should also be talented writers, or at least have potential, improving their craft with time and practice.

### **7.2.2 *Reading around the subject***

When discussing preparing to write a textbook, all the authors agree that there is an initial and important phase of reading. This includes ‘reading around the topic from relevant and reliable sources’ (Olly, line 298-9), ‘reading around the subject (Linda, line 020), ‘reading about places’ (Olly, line 009) and ‘reading it through again and again’ (Paul, 015-16). While preparing, authors also carry out ‘a huge amount of Internet searching’ (Paul, line 376), ‘look at the spec’ (Ron, line 004), and ‘review’ sample assessment questions (Ron, line 005). The interview extracts give an insight into the intensive nature of reading and these findings suggest that reading supports making connections in the mind of the authors between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Paul (line 016) reads widely to support his thinking about what is ‘already known’ and what is ‘not yet known’ and needs to be researched prior to writing. This process helps him to prioritise important tasks and relegate less important tasks such as researching familiar aspects of the specification until later. Rebus, Olly and Linda all speak about reviewing earlier versions of textbooks in preparation to write. According to Rebus, this is to understand how other writers select, construct and order content with ‘a golden thread running through’ (line 028). Not all authors agree with reviewing existing textbooks. Ron sees this kind of activity as backward looking, when authors should only be looking ahead and planning new content. This narrow window between authors being commissioned to write and the process of writing itself is not well documented, yet it is a vital stage of writing. It provides the space for authors to plan, reflect in action and structure their thoughts, ahead of getting into the mire of a particular topic, case study, place or specification point. It is a time for considering content structure and the bigger picture of what a chapter should look and feel like.

### 7.2.3 *A good researcher*

Authors agree that they should be good researchers, with a range of research skills and the expectation that they should ‘be prepared to spend a lot of time researching’ (Ron, line 197). Rebus suggests that it is her own research which has shaped her ability to write a textbook (line 475). Of the nine authors, three are educated to PhD level and three more have a master’s degree. Researching is not just about sourcing contemporary evidence, data and new subject content, it is about triangulating information from several sources to ensure data validity and reliability and being critical of the information they come across.

When asked whose writing they admire, most authors mention other school or academic geographers. The point being made here is that authors look to their peers for examples of good writing. Ron comments that authors need to write with ‘a good writing style, but not everyone can do that well’ (line 202). Ash’s (line 291-6) favourite book is Keith Hilton’s *Process and patterns in physical geography* because:

*There is a section in there on glacial retreat of ice leaving the landscape which is poetic in places, you can tell how much he loves the subject when you read it. His vocabulary is stunning, and he uses phrases and sentences that bring the text alive and to me as a 17-year-old it really made me want to read about what is really quite a dull topic.*

Ash describes Mick Witherick’s books as ‘lovely’, because ‘he uses language well’ (line 302). When discussing his own writing, Ash believes that he ‘will write better and add value to case studies that I am interested in, because I will enjoy the process more’ (line 101-3). Vic develops a similar point, suggesting that certain authors have particular areas of expertise which they should write about. It can be concluded that the craft of writing requires specific accumulated knowledge and skills, as well as an effective use of style, vocabulary, grammar use of language and much more. Perfecting these aspects of writing requires time and practice to develop and vision to apply these skills in new contexts.

#### 7.2.4 *Awareness of own identity*

During interview, authors reveal a tacit understanding of the attributes required to be a good at their job, no matter their level of experience. This is remarkable, as there is no job description for the role. No advert is ever published and there is no application form to submit (Jem, line 375). Instead, publishers commission geography educators, who lead teacher training events or have previously written publications, to get involved in textbook production. Developing expertise and standing within the geography education community takes time, meaning that most authors do not start writing textbooks at the beginning of their teaching career, rather somewhere in the middle when their expertise is developed and the opportunity arises. This idea of being in the right place at the right time is key and highlights that there is an element of chance involved. As Sam (line 351) notes:

*I spent lots of years not writing textbooks and now I write textbooks, I have not changed, I am the same person, it just happens to be that now people ask me to write textbooks and in the past they didn't.*

Rebus and Jem note how publishers assume that all teachers are capable of writing a textbook (line 381). Linda, an early-career author, finds this overwhelming. She mentions seeking support from other people and resources in order to feel like less of an imposter. Authors in this study are very aware of their own viewpoint and identity and how this influences their writing. Paul suggests that writing is an extension of his identity and if people who know him read his work they will recognise his connections to particular places in his writing. He concludes that 'part of my story is what I can write about, part of my geography' (line 484).

Table 34 The self-reported worldviews of the authors

Author	Worldview
Linda	My view of the world has been developed from a range of experiences. I am a woman, I am educated and I live in quite a rural place with my family.
Olly	I am very much aware of my identity as a white middle class European author.
Vic	I am aware that I am a middle-class male.
Ash	as a middle-class, male writer.
Paul	One is conscious when one is writing a textbook that you have got to be very wary about things like your political views.
Ron	I am a geographer, I am a teacher, I am in ITE and I like writing.

All the authors in this study identify themselves as being middle class, white and educated (Table 34). Four authors are women, five are men. Vic describes how geography is still ‘very, very male about measurement facts, you know development, economic decisions made by men’ (line 417-8). He suggests that ‘when you are writing about development that you really include a perspective about women in development and how significant they are as earners, as mothers as people, as partners, as resources...because they offer an alternative voice’ (line 412-4). In order to provide these voices, authors have to work hard and search harder, as they are sometimes difficult to find. Identity clearly affects the way Vic views and writes about space. He suggests that ‘it is not banging a drum or anything...it is about being inclusive not just for the sake of it, but, being inclusive because it is important to be’ (line 408-10). Ash hopes that his ‘writing is as post-colonial and feminist for a white man writing’ (line 335). Both Paul and Olly note that you need awareness of your own political views when writing. ‘One is conscious when writing a textbook that you have got to be very wary about things like your political views’ (Paul, line 567). This is particularly true when discussing the role of government and the consequences of political decisions. Olly reminds us that ‘there are many decisions that have taken place to make the geography that we see’ (line 312-3). He exemplifies this by pointing out that water availability is not just about whether it rains or not, but about political decisions related to distribution networks, public or private enterprise and cost.

Authors need a month-or-so full-time to write a textbook chapter. This makes writing difficult, but not impossible, for full-time teachers. Few of the authors in this study work full-time or have a typical work-life pattern. Linda makes an analogy between the way she writes and the way she works. She considers how she ‘juggles’ the different aspects of writing like she juggles her ‘completely crazy way of working’, with family life and other commitments (line 075 and 079). Linda is not the only author with a non-traditional work pattern. Some authors are retired and others work part-time as teachers, consultants and examiners, alongside their writing roles. This pattern of work and relative isolation while writing means that authors greatly value membership in their communities of practice which facilitate networking opportunities (as discussed in Section 6.4).

### 7.3 Theme 2: Working within constraints

All the authors are pragmatic about the constraints they experience while writing such as time, word and page limits (see Table 35). Authors suggest that several constraints are often at play together. This synergism can be problematic and potentially lead to missed deadlines, poor quality output or the cutting and pasting of content from other resources, which Ash suggested earlier is not good practice.

Table 35 Opportunities and constraints experienced during textbook writing

Opportunities	Constraints
Update subject content with ‘tested’ or familiar material	Page limits
Write about places experienced	Word limits
Replace ‘old’ places with new ones	Illustration number and type limit
Learn about and resource new case studies	Short turnaround/short deadlines
Make links with academics or other geographers ‘in place’	Size of author team
Develop geographical imaginations	Curriculum inertia
Help students think geographically	Tied to specification
Provide opportunities to explore new places with GIS, maps, images	Working from draft specifications
Support classroom pedagogy	Moving targets
	Document structure planned by editor
	Availability of data
	Assessment priority by publisher
	Eurocentric view

When reflecting on formal determinants such as the structure of education policy, authors think that skeletal A level geography specifications, like AQA’s, provide the space for teachers, as trusted practitioners, to flesh out the content for themselves. This is in contrast with detailed specifications, like Edexcel’s, which have no room to deviate and no space for curriculum-making activities or teaching beyond the specification. Three of the nine authors find key questions useful to structure their writing. However, these are not used across all specifications and are therefore not a universal tool. As Vic, Rebus and Paul note, there are issues with the formulaic, fixed structure that has been applied to examination-focused textbooks and what seems to have happened is that objective-led writing has increased through time. They suggest that the situation is a result of shifting from open-ended curriculum syllabuses to clearly defined examination specifications. Rebus discusses her preferences for writing Key Stage 3 (KS3) resources over

exam-focused textbooks which are ‘tied to a specification and stifle my creativity’ (line 512). She prefers writing KS3 resources which can be ‘based on enquiry geography’, ‘only tied by our imagination’ and allow ‘really interesting things’ (line 148-152). Rebus (line 448-51) concludes:

*This whole idea of enquiry, this whole curriculum-making should not stop at KS3, it is a whole way of thinking. Students at A level would learn so much more and be better geographers if they were allowed to do it.*

Several authors are supportive of the enquiry approach to learning, where students’ perspectives, experience and everyday geographies are built upon during lessons. These informal determinants can be quite significant. For example, Rebus draws on students’ experiences while teaching about the monsoon. Vic and Ron suggest that the local is a great starting point for fieldwork enquiry and Linda uses the local for skills and research development. Framing textbook content with an enquiry approach can give students a greater opportunity to research information, debate knowledge and collaborate (Vic, line 043). Sam highlights the importance of connecting geography to the students’ own experiences, with space for students to share and discuss their own ideas (line 321). Paul suggests that ‘experience of place is so important and people need to understand that their experience is part of what makes that place’ (line 700-2). Starting with his own presentation as a framework to support his students, Paul thinks that ‘students should research their places and do a presentation on how they see the meaning of their town to them’ (line 233-4). This type of scaffold is key to enquiry, yet is often missing at A level due to assessment and curriculum time pressures (Stobart, 2008).

When selecting content, authors note the importance of prioritising geographically significant content, with a preference for short-listing a number of case studies, places and types of activity and then taking the time to evaluate the best options. Unfortunately, publishing constraints significantly impact on this process. Rebus (line 493-501) stresses how some constraints are quite frustrating:

*There was a stipulation that there had to be 27 images of which seven were diagrams and how is that a good way to write a textbook? ...What happens*

*when I get to the end and I have run out of images?... As my geography teacher said an image is worth 1000 words and its having that, it gives it a different sense of place and a different spin on the content, yeah, I want to use a good image, but I don't really want to have restrictions placed on me to tell me whether I can do it or not.*

Vic deals with time constraints by finding a 'hook' at the beginning of a textbook chapter to maintain the reader's interest (line 030-1). Once this is identified, he shifts his attention to writing for the purpose of understanding, accessibility and progress, conveying key ideas to the students and taking them 'from where they are now to where you want to get them' (line 029-30). With time an ever-present constraint, Rebus (line 080) feels most stressed when she only has a week to write content on a new area of the specification. As the specification was still in draft form and she lacked experience of writing about wildfires, she needed to carry out much more research than usual. Time constraints test all authors. Vic's strategy is to use time efficiently to find a hook for interest, whereas, Rebus prioritises the search for content in order meet specification requirements. Neither strategy is objectively better, they just highlight different approaches and different priorities.

#### **7.4 Theme 3: Geography Matters: Conceptually framing the subject**

Textbooks are a key educational resource. Authors agree that geographical concepts, knowledge and case studies should be carefully structured in a way that helps teachers and students to think geographically about people and places. Several authors believe that key to this is having a confident author who can bring a sense of unity to a book. While discussing the textbook *Integrated Geography* (Waugh, 1998, 2005), a title which cornered the A level textbook market for over a decade, Vic describes how unity can be achieved with a careful selection of case studies, places and geographical concepts woven through each chapter. Rebus likens preparing to teach and the production of a coherent textbook (line 030) to the building of a jigsaw, balancing creativity and logicity (line 482-6), she explains:

*You have to know how things work in terms of the order, it is like a jigsaw, except there isn't a jigsaw there, so you are creating the jigsaw so that is the creative bit, and everything has to slot in nicely and be logical, so it's kind of having a brain that, or having the ability to do both of those things.*

Part of this process is understanding what the jigsaw needs to look like and how it will function, working forwards from specification content and working backwards from the assessment end point while selecting suitable subject content. Writing logical content with clear connections is a theme picked up by Ash and Jem. Ash suggests that specification content is somewhat 'siloed' (line 406) and having a subject divided into themes must be 'baffling to a learner as to how this is a coherent subject' (Ash, line 409). He believes that authors must work hard to bring coherence to a textbook. With this same concern in mind, Jem (line 080-2) is pleased that specialised concepts were included in DfE (2014a) content as it 'provides quite a useful framework in which to view thematic content and give a focus to case studies, which has not always happened in the past'. By including specialised concepts in the A level subject content, authors note how concepts can provide a framework for knowledge (Sam, line 130), add value to a student's education and provide consistency for the reader. This is important as textbooks do not have the space to include all the substantive knowledge required for a high-grade A level. In his interview, Paul (line 092) recalls advising teachers during a training event to apply the sub-headings in a textbook to their own teaching. This can provide a structure to lessons, even when they do not use case studies and places from the textbook. In a sense, Paul is structuring the thinking required by geography teachers and students, rather than fossilising particular places for study which he includes in his textbooks. Several other authors talk about framing knowledge in this way, either because the publisher had planned the content in this form or because such a framework supports the planning to write process. Ash notes that such a sense of unity is missing from some of the recently published textbooks, especially those with half a dozen or more authors and this has consequently reduced the quality of some textbooks.

Several of the authors in this study disagree to some extent with ALCAB as to which concepts are important at A level (see Section 2.2.9). There is plenty

of agreement for concepts such as place, space and scale, but little agreement about ALCAB's specialised concepts such as risk and diversity (DfE, 2014a), although both concepts are referred to by authors when discussing the selection of significant places. Drawing on his own education, Ash comments that his geography is a conceptual scaffold drawn from the likes of Massey, Harvey, Castells and Actor-Network and is possibly 'a bit out-of-date' as he left university several years ago (line 318). Academics are critical of school textbooks for not accurately reflecting contemporary disciplinary thinking (Knight, 2007) and this distance since formal education is one of the reasons.

Authors talk about two ways in which the meanings of concepts alter with time. Firstly, the phenomenon which concepts describe can change. For example, improved transport and communication infrastructure have made many rural areas more accessible. Consequently, examples of remote rural areas must come from ever-more peripheral locations. Secondly, concepts such as place theoretically shift with academic developments and this needs to be reflected in their definitions. As a result, some concepts taught at A level need to be understood more widely than they are presented in examination specifications or in textbooks. For example, Paul suggests that the broader concept of inequality rather than social inequality should be taught at A level, as it is difficult to separate out the social from the economic or political aspects of inequality. Four of the nine authors discuss negotiating the meaning of geographical concepts such as place, scale, local, remote, distant and inequality, discussed in Section 5.5.1. This foresight is a key characteristic of an expert author and supports the construction of quality educational resources.

Authors value ideas about identity, morality and global citizenship. Jem (line 063) notes that it is important to incorporate concepts such as cultural identity and inequality throughout a textbook. Vic (line 372-3) suggests that justice, hope, sustainability, fairness and power should be explored in school geography to empower young people. With desires for a more-equal society, authors have both the agency and opportunity to use the textbook as a vehicle to advocate a particular stance. One author, who self-identifies as being in a minority group, sees the value of threading the concept of cultural identity through their writing. This approach gives a voice to a range of people and provides the

opportunity for authors to create activities which facilitate debate and raise awareness of diversity, rather than learning fixed ideas about people and places which is not particularly inclusive and can lead to the single story of place.

### **7.5 Discussion of the overarching theme ‘know-how’**

As ‘teachers eagerly await the publication of new textbooks, to resource and support their training needs for the new content’ (Gardner’s, 2018, p.41), it is expected that authors have a great deal of decisional capital to make effective choices in a complex situation in a short timeframe. Authors in this study draw intuitively on expertise and tacit knowledge of subject content, assessment and pedagogy (Polanyi, 1967; Bernstein, 2000) to interpret formal policy and update their own knowledge in order to transform and communicate subject content in a textbook. An author’s vision for what a school textbook should look like requires talent, expertise and a balance of creativity and logicity which goes beyond proficiency, routines and rules (Timperley, 2013; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986). This means that authors are in a powerful position, as textbooks are the ‘main means’ (Westaway and Rawling, 1998, p.36) by which the curriculum is interpreted and represented to students. Authors work hard to ‘systematise and simplify traditional fields and forms of knowledge comprehensively and in accordance with disciplinary canons’ (Castell, 1990, p.78).

Textbook authors are agents of change and often have direct experience of a number of cycles of change and reform (Rawling, 2001), including changes to the approach, content and structure of the curriculum and the balance between knowledge and skills as a result of changing educational and political discourse (Ball, 2013a). Authors in this study have developed a rich skill set, from a range of professional experience which supports writing about a world and discipline which are constantly moving on (Massey, 2005). This know-how is important, as authors are in a powerful position as mediators of knowledge (Winter, 1996), with one eye on educational policy and A level guidelines and the other on the needs of students for successful learning, progression and assessment outcomes (Shulman, 1986). Yet, ‘know-how’ is a problematic form of knowledge in so-far-as it is tacit, under-theorised, difficult to fully articulate, held in ‘people’s heads and bodies’ (Polanyi, 1967) and rarely discussed or disseminated within the

publishing or education sector. In some ways, this is a missed opportunity for organisations including the Geographical Association (GA), who maintain the position that teachers, like authors, should not ‘deliver’ the curriculum, but should be agentic in their classroom and maintain their involvement in curriculum making activities (GA, 2012; Lambert and Morgan, 2010). As well as being undervalued, the concept of know-how is often too simplistically understood as the skills authors employ when writing, rather than their professional capital. Authors make decisions about writing, drawing on a breadth and depth of shared and accumulated subject knowledge, disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, specifically for students who are increasingly able to research, debate and understand questions of epistemology.

Although the participants in Lee and Catling’s (2016a) study were a more diverse group compared to the A level geography authors in this study, there are some similarities between the two studies, which suggests that writing textbooks requires much more than ‘know-how’ (p.342). For example, Lee and Catling (2016a, p.353) highlight how the process of writing requires authors to ‘deal with complex problem-solving tasks, and requires certain practical skills and expertise’. The practical knowledge authors develop through professional practice involves reflection-in-action and self-efficacy (Schön, 1983). The former is illustrated in my research by the essential pre-writing activities of reading and thinking which require time and space for authors to formulate their approach to writing and the latter as a continuation of conversations about the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment in subject communities and professional networks. This social aspect of know-how is key to negotiating the complexity and conceptual framework of subject content. Furthermore, professional practice in multiple roles including teaching, training and assessment means that authors can bridge all three of Bernstein’s (2000) educational message systems, while balancing their effort between the instructional discourse or knowledge to be transmitted and the regulative discourse of how knowledge will be transmitted.

Authors in this study provide numerous examples of their situated understanding or wisdom of practice (Shulman, 2004). Their thoughtful and systematic reflection on practice is evidenced by their choice of subject content, case studies, places and images, to the pitch, pace and progression applied in the

selected material. These findings can be organised into the first four stages of Rawling's (2007) curriculum planning circle (Figure 8). Stage 1 (read, reflect and review) comprises authors reading the specification and sample assessment material, updating their academic and everyday geographical knowledge and sometimes reading legacy textbooks. The concept of adaptive expertise (Timperley, 2013; Hatano and Inagaki, 1986) can go some way to help us understand the significant amount of time authors spend on professional learning activities carried out in preparation for writing. These activities include thinking, researching and reading about subject knowledge, real world geography, paradigms and conceptual understanding, pedagogy, the language and mechanism of A level assessment as evidenced in the sample assessment material. Stage 2 (clarify principles and define character) involves authors reviewing ALCAB guidelines, specification content and A level Subject Content (DfE, 2014a), to ensure that the formal policy is followed. Stage 3 (select content and arrange essential coverage) and Stage 4 (planning for assessment) occur together as content must cover the specification and be detailed enough for assessment success. Authors draw on their tacit and explicit knowledge intuitively (Polanyi, 1967), assessing whether the text, activities and practice examination questions which they draft are fit for purpose and whether they mirror the official language and structure of the limited amount of published sample assessment material.

A significant number of constraints which authors discuss are related to commercial decisions made by publishers and curriculum decisions by assessment organisations. This aligns with Waugh's (2000) experience as a prolific writer of 11-19 school textbooks (Waugh, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2005). His greatest concern was related to limited space for words and images and the associated consequences of these decisions. The most significant constraints mentioned in this research are the specification content and order, publishers' guidance and time. The latter two are consistent with the findings of Lee and Catling (2016a). The flexibility of a specification dictates the degree of author agency. Some authors prefer to write within such a scaffold, but others feel positively smothered. Two of the nine authors disagree with the current format of endorsed A level textbooks, preferring textbooks which are not fixed to the subject content of a particular specification and do not have such a formulaic double-page spread

design. No matter the structure, it should be concluded that ‘no textbook in isolation can satisfy the different needs and the wide-ranging approaches of all geography teachers’ (Waugh, 2000, p.94). Drawing on the findings of this study, authors see a number drawbacks of endorsed texts. The most pragmatic concern for teachers and students is that endorsed textbooks are often pitched at C-grade students and although they cover the specification, they do not amount to a two-year curriculum conversation and must be supplemented with other resources if students want to achieve high grades. Of greater concern is the unethical nature of the relationship between publishers and awarding organisations, as exemplified in the extreme by Pearson who hold excessive power in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as awarding organisation and textbook publisher. Endorsed texts written to support assessment-driven curricula may leave students unprepared for university due to their highly-structured design and exam preparation focus. However, if authors are aware of these issues, then they can use their agency to ameliorate them by structuring content through enquiry, including aspirational levels of subject content and designing activities to support further research and signposting alternative sources of information.

Culture influences our experiences in the world. As society changes, so too does the way we classify and understand it (Morgan, 2003a). Castree (2011, p.298) helpfully describes this pluralism in the way different specialisms within the discipline understand concepts such as place as the ‘disunity of geography’. By reintroducing core content, ALCAB address Pointon’s (2008, p.9) concern that universities are not ‘able to assume a commonality of prior learning’ without a core A level curriculum. In trying to address the problem of siloed thematic content, authors in this study were pleased that ALCAB listed specialised concepts to bridge the core and optional units. They did however question ALCAB’s selection and were concerned that specialised concepts could be an under-utilised tool for connecting disparate units together. Professional expertise allows A level textbook authors to draw on the multi-paradigmatic discipline, using a variety of conceptual frameworks to structure subject content and explain substantive concepts (Counsell, 2018). It also supports authors in making appropriate choices about instructional methods, mitigating against student misconceptions as they understand the specific educational context in which

students operate (including their prior knowledge, attainment, circumstances and motivations). Although textbooks are written by experts, some authors raise the concern that teachers assume that textbooks are the only resource necessary for successful assessment outcomes for all. These assumptions can be problematic for students taught by non-specialists (without a geography degree), which according to the Education Policy Institute (Sibieta, 2018) affects 12.9 per cent of 11-18 students and increases in more deprived areas. Furthermore, in schools with an ‘anti-textbook culture’ (Marsden, 2001), teachers are going to miss out on the support with content and pedagogy which textbooks can provide.

## **7.6 Summary**

The findings and discussion presented in Chapter Seven recognise that textbook authors are expert practitioners with a deep subject knowledge, the ability to research and write well and inclination to read vociferously. The ‘know-how’ of textbook production or author expertise is developed through longstanding experiences as teachers, examiners, teacher trainers and resource writers. Such phronesis (Biesta, 2013) supports complex decision-making and relies on intuition and creative thinking to reach solutions, allowing authors to efficiently use the narrow writing window to produce high quality educational resources. It also helps when authors are faced with multiple constraints such as limited time and space, a fixed curriculum content and publishing requirements. Interestingly, experience is no substitute for preparation prior to the writing phase of textbook production. All the authors discuss reading, researching and reviewing policy documents prior to writing. This is an essential preparation stage where thinking, reflection and planning occur and the shape of a chapter begins to emerge. Authors plan how they will weave ideas, skills and places through their writing, add coherence and write with a united voice, even when a textbook is co-authored. They also consider what style of writing is most suitable, what type of activities to include and whether data are presented as text, graphs, photographs or other forms of illustrations. An aspect of this process is drawing on the shared expertise of fellow geography educators to negotiate and define concepts, prioritise case studies and subject content and verify the meanings written in policy documents.

Having now explored the theme know-how which recognises the characteristics of author expertise and how this practical knowledge is used to overcome constraints while structuring subject content, the next chapter focuses on the purpose of an A level textbook and more broadly the purpose of a geographical education.

## 8 What is the purpose of a textbook and a geography education?

The findings for this research question focus on the purpose of a textbook and more broadly a geographical education and are grouped under the overarching theme ‘know-why’. This question is important as one of ALCAB’s first recommendations, and a driving force for A level reform, is that A level content ‘must prepare students who go on to study geography and related subjects at university, and be relevant to those who end their studies of geography at A level’ (ALCAB, 2014, p.2). Using the words of authors from the interview transcripts, a narrative for the theme ‘know-why’ is presented in Appendix D.

### 8.1 Introduction to the overarching theme ‘know-why’

This research question is rather synoptic in nature and this guides the following three sub-themes: ‘Bringing assessment, geography and teaching knowledge together’, ‘The purpose of an A level textbook’ and ‘The purpose of a geographical education’. These sub-themes bring together ideas about why textbooks are written, their wider purpose and what makes for a good geographical education. Table 36 presents the themes identified to help answer this research question.

Table 36 Themes identified under the overarching theme ‘know-why’

Sub-themes	Micro-themes
Bringing assessment, geography and teaching knowledge together	Think like a student Think like an examiner Think like a teacher Think like a researcher Think like an editor/ publisher
The purpose of an A level textbook	Aspirational level of subject content Appropriate approach to textbook Providing teachers with confidence
The purpose of a geographical education	Broaden horizons – places students ought to know about Providing a good geographical education for all Provide a framework to support teachers and students Understanding the wider purpose of education

## **8.2 Theme 1: Bringing assessment, geography and teaching knowledge together**

The key ideas associated with the first sub-theme of 'Bringing assessment, geography and teaching knowledge together' relate to the empathy shown by authors for textbook users and producers. All the authors discuss viewing A level subject content from a number of different perspectives, as geographers, examiners, teachers and students. Judging content develops from classroom practice and is then translated for use in textbook design. As Olly notes 'you have to have in your head what you think a good A Level student should be discussing and able to discuss' (line 398-99). Rebus makes the point that 'you have got to get into the mind of the examiner, you have got to know all about the assessment objectives, you need to know what the examiner wants' (Rebus, line 520-21). This gaze allows the authors to effectively judge whether content is suitably pitched, detailed and relevant for the purpose of teaching, learning and assessment. Authors who are examiners have insight and tacit knowledge about the purpose and process of assessment which can add significant value to a textbook (Jem, line 372). For example, while assessing candidate work, examiners read responses from the whole student cohort and develop an understanding of the pitch, language, grammar and syntax commonly used by 17 and 18-year olds and the ability to differentiate responses by grade. An examiner's gaze also allows authors to confirm that subject content is detailed enough to support students preparing for examinations, to match content to assessment criteria and for the construction of practice examination questions and associated mark schemes (Olly, line 396).

Textbook authors who work with assessment organisations are well placed to write assessment material for formal exams and subject content for inclusion in textbooks, as they have oversight of both assessment and teaching. Talking from a Talcott Parsons perspective, Ash is quite open to students writing examination answers with content taken directly from a textbook as it is easier to standardise marking when the scripts 'are not jumping around wildly', the marking process is more reliable and students gain a more accurate grade (line 270-4). Yet, this structuralist approach to assessment and educational resources is problematic and jars with Ash's understanding of what a good education looks like (see Section 8.4). All the authors agree that a good geography teacher will teach beyond the textbook. This is arguably more important than the reliability of

examination scripts. Paul (line 152) recalls positively rejoicing in his role as an examiner when reading about new places in examination responses, as this is an indicator of good geography being taught.

The close link between assessment and curriculum at A level is one of the reasons why, in the past, publishers asked principal examiners to author endorsed textbooks. This situation was not healthy (Ofqual, 2012) or ethical and as Ash points out, your credentials to write a book should not be because you are a principal examiner, but rather because you have ‘talent as a writer’ (line 306). Assessment expertise is desirable for any A level author. Otherwise, it is really hard to write content to meet the needs of assessment and create authentic practice examination questions and mark schemes (Rebus, line 520). This is especially true for new specifications where there is only one published set of sample assessment material available for review from assessment organisations. Authors with examiner experience constantly refer back to the sample assessment material to verify that content is suitable for examination use (Olly, line 343).

All the authors use a number of subordinating conjunctions as sentences starters. For example, ‘if you are going to teach about place’ (Olly, line 140), ‘if teachers already have a good selection of resources’ (Jem, line 450) and ‘if you can get students thinking for themselves’ (Linda, line 266-7). Each of these examples show authors thinking about classroom practice through the eyes of teachers. In reviewing the transcripts, it seems to be the case that authors with a longer career in education tend to speak from a greater number of standpoints. Linda is an early-career author who only talks from the perspective of teacher or student, with limited experience of examining or authoring to draw upon. Whereas, Ash, Paul and Vic all use a variety of subordinating conjunctions to contextualise each point that they make. On a number of occasions, Vic, Paul and Ron differentiate A level students by where they live. For example, ‘if you were a school in the Bristol region’ (Paul, line 404), ‘in say Leeds’ (Vic, line 131), ‘in a school in Sheffield’ (Ron, line 160) to highlight their concern for student context when selecting places and case studies. Ash (line 029-31 and 145) differentiates students according to their career paths by beginning sentences with ‘if you are progressing to higher education’, ‘going out into the broader life’ and ‘doing a pub quiz’ to justify the importance of studying geography. Such a gaze takes in

the differences within a student cohort and the importance of knowing your audience when writing a textbook which Rebus (line 185) think is really important. Furthermore, experienced authors also show empathy for the people they represent in their writing. Vic, for example, talks about writing from the stance of migrants, women collecting water and rail travellers experiencing remote rural places. Such empathy is a useful tool authors can employ to bring their writing to life.

### **8.3 Theme 2: The purpose of an A level textbook**

Textbooks are just one of many resources which feature in the resource ecology of a classroom. They support teachers to prepare their students for A levels, but are no substitute for the expertise of a subject specialist. Sam values textbooks as they ‘are the only place where there is the information that [teachers] need, in one place, where they can guarantee that the assessment organisation is happy with them, because they have approved them’ (line 303-5). Although, he also notes that textbooks have a relatively short shelf life and are best used ‘fresh’ after publication (line 301). Textbooks should not ‘represent an out-of-date view of the world’ (Linda, line 232). Yet, due to their expense ‘there is a tendency to use them past their sell-by-date’ (Sam, line 299). The authors agree that A level curriculum change is a welcome opportunity to create new textbooks with ‘tried and tested’ or reworked teaching material (Sam, line 221), up-to-date case studies, new places and supportive activities and examination advice (Linda, line 231; Jem, line 390).

Authors worry that case studies and places can become over-represented in school geography, as they appear in legacy textbooks and are then replicated in a range of classroom resources. Curriculum reform provides an opportunity for the introduction of places ‘that haven’t had an airing before, to keep people awake and on the right page’ (Vic, line 326). This can move teaching and learning along, while better representing the contemporary world and parent discipline. It also provides the opportunity to renew connections with academics and other geographers working ‘in place’ (Sam, line 268). Some authors see this as an important process, as much to update their own knowledge as to disseminate contemporary subject content within the teaching community.

Writing a textbook is a complex, non-linear process which requires a depth of knowledge, expertise, talent and vision. Authors in this study suggest that well-written textbooks can be transformative and add value to a geographical education. Adding value is more than selecting interesting and relevant content (Olly, line 152; Ron, line 246). Authors agree that it is also about bringing the ‘real world into the textbook’ (Paul, line 503), selecting content and using ‘language that matters’ (Ash, line 178), then ‘working really hard on the behalf of the learner to show them the geography’ (Ash, line 290). Rebus suggests that value can also be added by getting students to think critically and question the source and nature of knowledge represented in a textbook. Criticality further supports authors to question why subject content is in the curriculum and how it is going to be represented.

All the participants in this study take their responsibility as textbook authors very seriously and have professional pride in their work. They have their own vision as to how textbooks should be used in the classroom, but they do not expect books to be used from cover to cover. Paul talks about framing his writing conceptually in order to communicate the important aspects of the subject to teachers. He views teachers as curriculum-makers and his message is ‘don’t use the examples in here if you do not want to’ (line 189). As an examiner, Paul likes to read responses ‘that have clearly not come from a textbook, either a student on their own or a particularly inspired teacher has done something that you won’t find in a textbook’ (line 190-192). Clearly, Paul’s idea of a good textbook is as a framework for teaching, providing a considered approach to geography teaching and learning and a resource on which to fall back. The views of Vic and Paul align. Vic sees great potential in textbooks and would like to see them used much more, his concern is that ‘many students just use them for grabbing before the examination and just read the text’ (line 435-7). Vic believes that by completing the activities students can add value to their geographical education, but he is aware that activities are quite under-utilised by teachers and students.

#### **8.4 Theme 3: The purpose of a geographical education**

According to some of the authors in this study, you cannot teach a whole A level with just the use of a textbook. Ron (line 188-9) suggests that textbooks can be ‘a

good starting point'. Ash advises that textbooks are pitched to a C-grade student and therefore they do not contain enough detail to cover a two-year geography course. This observation is also picked up by Ron, who comments that a textbook 'has been written within certain parameters, and it is not going to deliver A\*s' (line 110-1). She illustrates this with reference to one particular sample examination question which went beyond specification content. Supposing 'my students had sat that question, I would have been pretty cross, because I am thinking this is not really in the specification' (line 096-7). These points are a reminder to teachers that it is necessary to teach beyond the specification and the textbook. Paul (line 620-5) takes this idea a little further when he comments:

*There are other people in the world with very different perspectives... Be open to learning more, don't be closed, yours is not the only view, that is important and that is why you want a variety of places there, surely any good geography teacher does that. Isn't that one of their mission statements to show students how diverse this world is?*

Paul's sage advice cuts to the crux of what a good geography education ought to be, as something beyond an examination specification or textbook. Considering that not all A level students progress to university to study geography, the content teachers use in the classroom should be relevant to them all. For example, Paul likes to use relevant and familiar places with students so they can easily understand new subject content and Ash (line 032-4) believes that a good geographical education should provide a 'good world map for people who are not taking geography forward and important place knowledge for those who are'.

There is mixed opinion from the textbook authors as to whether Changing Places should be taught as a stand-alone unit (Table 37). Six of the authors agree that place should be a discrete unit, two are undecided and one feels that it would be better embedded in a different unit such as a global or urban/rural unit. Authors give a number of reasons for the benefit of teaching place as a discrete unit. Most authors see it as being beneficial to A level students going onto study geography and some note that it serves to keep the school subject up-to-date with developments in academia. Two authors further suggest that the study of place

has been a central focus for the discipline and it is about time that this is replicated in school geography, helping to reduce the school-university disconnect which Vic suggests ‘has been around for far too long’. Paul notes that new A level subject content will ‘challenge students about the meaning of space and place, as for too long A level Geography has lacked intellectual rigour in conceptual terms’. These two quotes support the idea that A level reform was well overdue and that input from ALCAB was key to setting an aspirational level of subject content and narrowing the divide between school and academic geography.

Table 37 Place as a stand-alone unit at A level

yes	unsure
<p><b>Linda</b> - can usefully bridge the year 12/13 and undergraduate experience of geography. As a topic it demonstrates the links between school subjects like geography and history - classes as 'social sciences' at university.</p> <p><b>Olly</b> - because it requires a particular set of questions (and responses) that would get de-emphasised or confused if undertaken through a theme.</p> <p><b>Rebus</b> - one of geography's key organising concepts and important/interesting in its own right. There is a danger that, if not investigated as a stand-alone unit, 'place' becomes a series of superficial, random case studies which are bolted on to other content.</p> <p><b>Jem</b> - will benefit many A level students going onto study geography at university.</p> <p><b>Sam</b> - very important to do a unit at this stage which allows students to make connections and share their places.</p> <p><b>Ron</b> - has been included in many undergraduate courses for a number of years so it is appropriate to include it at A level. It is different to more traditional human geography but still accessible for A level.</p>	<p><b>Vic</b> - Hard one. I'm not particularly in favour of forcing anyone to have to study anything. There is a pragmatic reason for having Place in the core – that teachers under the age of 40 (the majority) have largely learned about place in their degrees, so NOT to have place would suggest a school-HEI disconnect that has been around for far too long. It has served too to update Geography curricula which were in dire need of updating; there are strong reasons for saying that place is much more a contemporary post-modern expression of how people see and learn to understand the world.</p> <p><b>Paul</b> - for too long A level Geography has lacked some intellectual rigour in conceptual terms. However, much of what we have been told to include under 'Place' can be found scattered across the existing curriculum.</p>
	<b>no</b>
	<p><b>Ash</b> - it is better embedded, probably within a global unit and an urban/rural unit.</p>

## 8.5 Discussion of the overarching theme ‘know-why’

Authors rely on their own professional expertise developed from multiple roles, as examiners, teachers and teacher trainers, to write quality A level geography textbooks. This experience represents the interplay between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Authors understand the complex requirements of textbook production and, as reflective practitioners, they draw on accumulated and shared expertise to make the most appropriate choices about textbook content. The following comment from Waugh (2000, p.93) still resonates:

*The textbook is likely to remain the most valuable teaching resource. This assumes that teachers realise that the textbook is only a ‘resource’ and as such can never replace the skills, knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise of the classroom teacher.*

Authors are very aware that endorsed textbooks serve a particular need. Some of the authors would prefer a less comfortable relationship between curriculum and assessment, this is also a concern raised by Ofqual (2012) and fellow geography educators (Puttick, 2015a). As Oates (2014, p.4) explains:

*High quality textbooks support both teachers and pupils – they free teachers up to concentrate on refining pedagogy and developing engaging, effective learning.*

The idea that textbooks have the potential to be a valuable curriculum resource, especially when there is ‘little or no planning time’ (Waugh, 2000, p.96), explains the success of Waugh’s Key Stage 3 textbook series which met the needs of teachers dealing with the new National Curriculum in 2001 (Rawling, 2001). Arguably, this also applies to the situation teachers found themselves in during 2016/7, with the concurrent introduction of new GCSE and A level specifications for first examinations in 2018 (Mitchell, 2016). In such a pressurised school environment, textbooks can worryingly ‘act as the curriculum’ (Jo and Bednarz, 2009, p.4), providing teachers, including non-specialists, with some confidence that their approach meets assessment and student needs.

According to the authors in this study, a good geographical education can help students to broaden their horizons and provide them with a good world map and foundational knowledge of geographical concepts, themes and places. Reflecting on her experience of observing PGCE students, Roberts (2010) suggests that a focus on geography, opportunities to make sense of geography and thinking geographically (Jackson, 2006) are key aspects of good geography lessons; it is possible to include these in a textbook. The importance of thinking geographically and subject knowledge are key concerns for the authors in this study. Authors appreciate that the body of knowledge set out in examination specifications does not, and cannot, incorporate all the sub-disciplines of geography taught at university as there is not enough time, space or desire for the school curriculum to do this. ALCAB guidance (Evans, 2014) therefore only included four core themes, two themes from human geography and two from physical geography. As Priestley and Humes (2010, p.348) comment when discussing Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, it is 'not possible to teach the whole corpus of human knowledge, so selection has to be made'. With so much geography in the world, decisions over subject content are 'fundamentally political and ideological' (Priestley and Humes, 2010, p.348). Consequently, authors need to employ their decisional capital, while gazing to the parent discipline, to select, recontextualise and frame knowledge for inclusion in a textbook.

The authors agree that a good geography education is not just about the selection of knowledge. This aligns with Chang and Kidman's (2019, p.2) comment that 'beyond knowledge, we must be able to help geography students learn skills and attitudes that will help them for the 21st century'. They also note that geography should be contemporary and relevant, suggesting:

*Beyond thinking about how academic geography can shape the curriculum, how pedagogy can be improved and how learning should be assessed, there is a dire need for geography to be relevant to the learners in their times.*

Relevance can be problematic for authors who are not directly connected to their readers in the same way that teachers are connected with their students. Yet, authors try to make connections with students through their choice of places and textbook activities, with the purpose of connecting the mundane, everyday knowledge students bring to school with their geography education.

Textbooks provide content around Bernstein's (2000) three message systems of the pedagogic device. Messages related to assessment come from the official discourse of the assessment organisations, Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and Ofqual. Messaging related to the curriculum comes from the government (DfE, 2014a), ALCAB (Evans, 2014) and the publishing industry, but messaging about pedagogy is not so well championed. Curriculum and textbook structures can empower or emancipate teachers. Some authors feel strongly about this constraint and so choose to write for a particular assessment organisations and/or publisher. For example, two of the authors note that the Edexcel specification, built on the legacy of the Geography 16-19 Project is structured with question-driven enquiry (Roberts, 2003, 2013) and one particular publisher prioritises enquiry to structure subject content. Such an approach can be transformative and is the reason why some authors remain loyal to particular publishers. In a study with over three hundred 14/15-year-old students in a Finnish comprehensive school, Kuisma (2019) concludes that 'enquiry can enhance motivation and the acquisition of both geographical skills and knowledge' (p.95), although it 'requires tremendous effort from both the teacher and the students' (p.96). Enquiry also requires effort from authors, but they feel that it is worth going the extra mile. Following a constructivist epistemology, teachers who adopt an enquiry approach are able to embed the students' own geography into lessons, building out from what they already know (Roberts, 2013; Piaget, 1967). There should be space in the A level textbook market for books with a stronger enquiry approach, alongside or replacing assessment-focused titles.

With an emphasis on knowledge rather than pedagogy, the AQA specification is described by some authors as being very traditional. Authors who write for AQA do not discuss writing activities, their focus when describing textbook production was on knowledge. This aligns with the knowledge-rich curriculum discourse (Hirsch, 1988; Wheelahan 2010) which has been

encouraged by current government ministers and a number of multi-academy trusts in England (Counsell, 2018). Authors who write content using Edexcel and OCR specifications, talk about including more activities in their textbooks compared to others. This suggests that these authors see the importance of framing knowledge and pedagogy (Roberts, 2013). Modelling pedagogy in a textbook can support teachers and their classroom practice (Loughran and Berry, 2005; Shulman, 1986). No matter how important pedagogic considerations are, they must still be balanced with publishing constraints which will inevitably hold greater weight when deciding on textbook content.

Disquiet about the involvement of assessment organisations in the textbook market, particularly the employment of principal examiners as textbook authors, impacted negatively on A level standards, the reputation of assessment organisations and confidence in the examination system (Gove 2013; DfE, 2014c). This situation was partially resolved by Ofqual in 2012 with a review of the alignment between publishing and assessment activities as well as endorsement processes and the consequent introduction of a healthy qualifications market work plan. Although Ofqual (2012, p.7) was ‘satisfied that there is sufficient distance between publishing and examining across all boards’, this satisfaction was not universally felt. Authors in this study did talk about their reduced freedom to write and lead assessment training activities at A level, although they understood the benefits of a healthy qualification market for teachers and students. What was of greater concern for the authors was the implications of additional pressures and publishing choices linked to such a short writing window. This is part of the discussion in Section 8.6.

## **8.6 Driving up standards**

Reflecting on the key drivers of the 2014 A level reform process, it is worth analysing whether textbook authors have been able to support the government’s ambition to stop grade inflation and ‘dumbing down’, while improving the quality of A levels to better prepare students going on to university (Gove, 2013; Gibb, 2014). As part of this process of structural change and the re-establishment of order and control (Biesta, 2017), the government wanted to raise standards. It was suggested that new textbooks were necessary in ‘realising the aims of national

curricula and supporting effective teaching’ (Gibbs, 2014, p.2). This influenced textbook form and content and provided the opportunity for research using an analytical lens focused on the nature of geographical knowledge and the ideology that underpins such knowledge. There is, however, little evidence to link textbook use and high educational outcomes and little evidence from this study that textbooks authors were encouraged by publishers to include more challenging content, beyond new subject content. Yet, the authors in this study agree that the attributes of their textbooks match the attributes of high-quality resources as set out by the Publishers Association (PA, 2015a).

The key features of a high-quality educational resource are set out against the views of the authors in this study and presented in Appendix G. The guidelines align closely with the views of the authors and bring together ideas of professional capital from the literature and my research. According to PA (2015a, p.4) guidance about geography teaching resources:

*Textbooks should be authored and edited by experts who draw on research evidence and accrued professional experience; people who represent best practice along with the ability to add flexible value-added elements to a quality baseline.*

All the authors in this study champion writing with a clear narrative which tells the geographical story. A number of authors value textbooks with a single, clear and authoritative voice. Whether this is a single author or the result of a good editor is somewhat less important. However, they are aware of time constraints associated with having a narrow writing window and therefore the need to engage a large group of authors to co-write a textbook. The use of multiple authors writing one title is problematic as it reduces curriculum and conceptual coherence and consequently textbook quality. As Ash (line 218) notes, it ‘just looks bonkers’ to see two similar, but different case studies in two chapters in the same textbook. However, authors also argue that the use of a single place coming from a different angle in two chapters can reinforce knowledge, reduce the total number of case studies students need to learn and reduce stereotypes and bias. Guideline 1.3 notes that textbooks should not be narrowly targeted on particular specifications and Guideline 2.5 notes that subject content should not be limited to examination

requirements. However, during the 2014 A level reforms, the government made no moves to restrict assessment organisations from endorsing or publishing textbook resources. A majority of the authors do not like endorsed textbooks or their formulaic structure. Two authors discuss a preference for a time before endorsed textbooks dominated the market and another could not see the situation changing and stated a preference for writing at a different key stage in the future.

The PA guidelines suggest a need for careful pitch, pace and progression of subject content and a balance between breadth and depth; these ideals are shared by the authors, ALCAB and the assessment organisations. However, as Ash points out, there is not enough space in a book for a two-year conversation. This key constraint limits the breadth and depth of subject content to ‘a superficial account’ (Ron, line 90). Yet, the authors also agree that the depth and breadth of subject content should be sufficient to allow students to fully answer an examination question on any aspect of the course. Furthermore, the limited amount of sample assessment material published requires authors to draw on their assessment expertise to predict the range of possible examination questions which could be set over the life of the specification.

Guidelines 2.7-2.9 set out the need to use accurate and comprehensive data, raise ethical and political issues and add context with real life case studies and locational examples. These guidelines with a geographical focus, align with the authors’ thinking. It is interesting that Guideline 2.7 talks of ‘accurate and comprehensive data’ and Guideline 2.8 focuses on issues to be presented as open to discussion in the same way that Soja (1996) discusses Firstspace and Secondspace, respectively. A geographer might wish these two guidelines to be combined to form Thirdspace (Soja, 1996) or a space that gets beyond other real and imagined places. Real-life, contemporary case studies, knowledge, data and locational examples are all given as characteristics of quality textbook content by the authors in this study. Authors agree that they want to bring their text to life, to use language that matters, to use crystal clear visualisations, to paint a picture of place and bring in different voices to their work. This is rather contradictory to the evidence in Figure 29-33 that textbooks portray a fairly limited number of places on a national and global scale. The final guideline requires textbooks to provide links to websites where additional information can be found. Due to the

obsolescence of websites and links breaking, hard copy textbooks avoid printing website addresses. However, where there are electronic resources, for example for Cambridge Elevate or Hodder's Dynamic Learning, website addresses can be included as they are easy to updated as required.

## **8.7 Summary**

The findings and discussion presented in Chapter Eight, regarding the purpose of textbooks and a good geographical education, suggest that successful authors draw on classroom experience and are able to get into the mind of students, teachers and examiners in order to write effectively for assessment and curriculum purposes. Authors appreciate how a textbook provides endorsed, quality-assured content which is up-to-date, representative of the contemporary world and written by experts. According to the authors in this study, high-quality textbooks add value to a geographical education, use language that matters and conceptually frame subject content. They should be a key feature of a rich classroom resource ecology, supporting the aims of the national curricula and effective teaching which will 'ultimately raise academic standards' (Oates, 2014, p.2). Teachers understand the context of the school and community in which they work and have the ultimate responsibility for the knowledge, ideology and values reproduced in the classroom and experienced by students (Aoki, 1999). Teachers are influenced by a number of actors who take formal educational policy then remake, rework, interpret and enact it within educational institutions and arenas of practice (Ball, 2012). Policies are contested, 'they are inflected, mediated, resisted and misunderstood, or in some cases simply prove unworkable' (Ball, 2013a, p.9). Without time to reflect on how policy impacts their practice, teachers turn to privileged pedagogic texts and trusted members of the epistemic community such as textbook authors, many with 'considerable standing' (Lambert and Morgan, 2009, p.147) for advice about how to understand such policy. Authors must therefore be attentive to the consequences of their decisions about the selection, construction and representation of people and places in a textbook, because their words can become 'the curriculum' as experienced by students for years to come (Winter, 2017). Authors rarely have the opportunity to put into words their tacit

understanding of the complex process of writing a textbook. Consequently, this taken-for-granted know-how is significantly undervalued.

The formation and guidance of ALCAB has been particularly welcomed by authors. Bringing disciplinary knowledge directly into the A level curriculum supports the government's drive for a knowledge-rich curriculum. However, ALCAB's work was focused in the curriculum message system and not in the assessment system. Historically, academics have been involved in the work of assessment organisations, working across the curriculum and assessment systems. A significant impact of having very little input from universities in the assessment message system has been the 'chasm' (Goudie, 1993, p.338) that had developed between school and university geography. This divide will likely widen as the revised specifications age and the discipline continues to develop and move on. During interview, one of the authors wanted to retain ALCAB to provide continuity in the process of curriculum development. Yet, once ALCAB had provided expert advice, the government ceased their funding (Morgan, 2014).

Writing in 1991, Roberts was critical that curriculum reform had failed to build on developments in education; this criticism still holds sway. When discussing high-performing jurisdictions, Askew *et al.* (2010, p.34) suggest that frequent curriculum reform 'limits the time available for the development and trialling of textbooks'. Stability in an education system is an essential condition to foster improvement and development, whether it be of high-quality textbooks or the curriculum itself. Picking up Nick Gibb challenge to codify high textbook standards (Winter, 2015), the PA's (2015a) characteristics of high-quality geography resources align closely with the views of the authors in this study and should therefore be disseminated more widely.

The reversal of the government's commitment to working with universities on A level curriculum matters points to a lack of political support for the A level review and feedback process, which Oates (2014) suggests is key to successful curriculum development and would provide confidence that the 'intentions [of ALCAB] have been realised' (Thrift, 2015). If we want a bridge rather than a chasm between school and university geography, then there is a need for more permanent connections across all three of Bernstein's (2000) message systems.

## 9 Conclusion

### 9.1 Introduction

This final chapter summarises my research findings in light of the overarching conceptual framework, before considering some recommendations for policy, practice and further research and my plans for dissemination (Section 9.2 to 9.4). I then consider the limitations of this study, methodological innovations and end the chapter with some final remarks (Section 9.5 to 9.7).

### 9.2 Summary of findings

I presented my research findings and discussions with regard to authors' thoughts about writing endorsed A level Geography textbooks, one research question at a time in Chapter Four to Eight. Each of these chapters focused on an overarching theme. Together, these five themes are framed by Bernstein's (2000) pedagogic device and Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) concept of professional capital. Figure 34 is a visualisation which helps to locate my research findings within my conceptual framework.

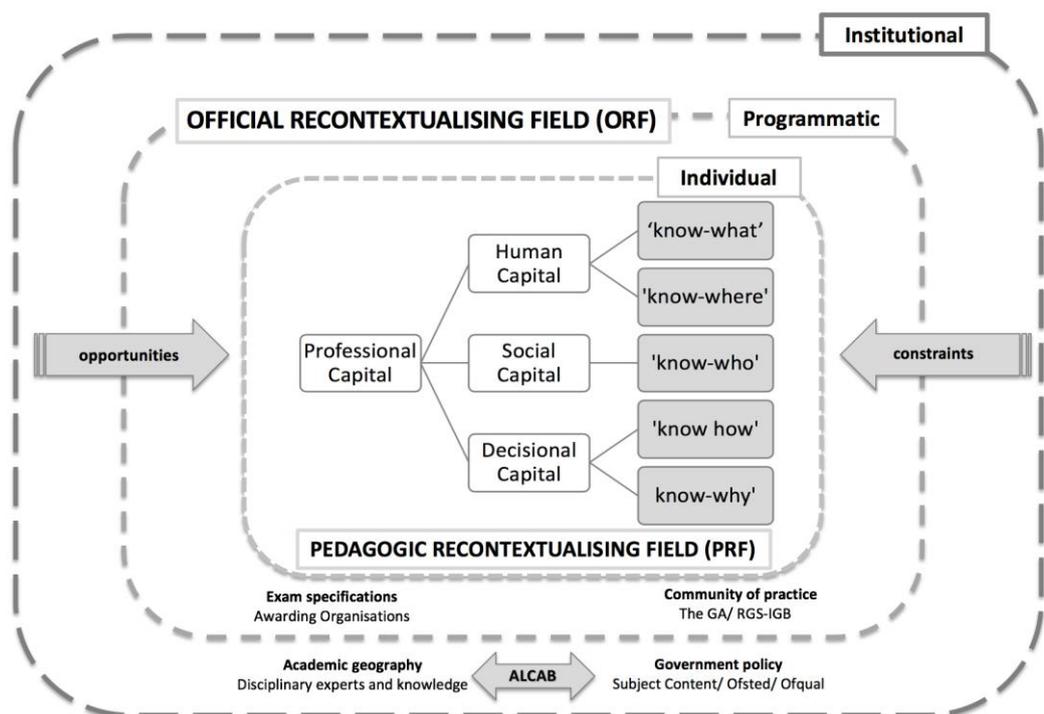


Figure 34 Overarching themes incorporated into the conceptual framework

In the rest of this section I provide a summary of my findings, followed by a discussion of the two aspects of my conceptual framework.

**RQ1: What is the nature and source of knowledge authors draw upon while writing an A level geography textbook?**

Authors all recall the significant amount of time they spend preparing, reading and researching prior to writing. Unexpectedly, most of this time is spent reviewing the specification and sample assessment material and sourcing contemporary, mundane knowledge about people and places rather than reading academic texts. Serendipity, luck and opportunism expresses this research process quite well. Due to the complexity of writing an endorsed A level Geography textbook, authors prefer to write about familiar, interesting and experienced places. Where this is not possible, authors rely on more vicarious sources of knowledge and their geographical imagination to create vivid representations of place. Expertise is required to select, verify, mediate and pitch knowledge. However, this process of recontextualisation can inadvertently introduce stereotypes and bias, due to publishing and specification constraints such as prescribed content, time and space. As textbooks are pedagogic transmitters, authors aim to present different voices, a variety of knowledge and opportunities to debate and challenge assumptions in order to provide a broad and balanced view of the world.

**RQ2: How do authors select and recontextualise place in an A level geography textbook?**

Authors do not have homogeneous views about place; this is not surprising considering the multi-paradigmatic nature of geography. Geographical perspectives, along with a range of formal and informal determinants such as specification content, experience, available information and contemporary issues all influence which places authors select for inclusion in a textbook. Authors often order places within hierarchies or continuums such as local-distant, urban-rural, core-peripheral to support decision-making. They make intuitive choices about the places students ought to know about, and the places which can exemplify a particular theme or concept, ensuring a diversity of places are represented. Places selected can be representative or extreme examples of a particular issue, theme or concept. At times, authors select extreme examples such as the fastest eroding coastline or city most likely to flood with sea level rise. These bookend examples

can result in a rather alarmist geography, which needs to be balanced with more representative examples of places such as the study of local areas.

**RQ3: Who in the community of practice inspires and supports authors?**

Authors are inspired and supported by individuals, groups and communities of practice. Influential others include academics, teacher educators and a range of other people. Authors start their careers in the classroom and as teachers spend much of their time in a geography department; their peers can be hugely influential. Participation in subject associations, learned societies, research projects and professional development events can be transformative, supporting collaboration, networking and the development of accumulated and shared expertise.

**RQ4: How do textbook authors employ their tacit knowledge and decisional capital while writing?**

Authors recognise in themselves and others the traits of a good writer, they are also noted by the PA (2015a; 2015b). To be a good writer, an author needs a depth of accumulated and shared knowledge, talent and well-honed research skills. These characteristics are developed from classroom experience and enriched by roles in assessment, resource writing, educational consultancy and teacher education. Such opportunities support criticality, ethically sound judgement, reflective practice and broader situational perception, enabling authors to see school geography from a different view. Consequently, authors are able to visualise what a good textbook looks like and use this knowledge when working on a new book to order, conceptually frame and pitch content, and ultimately to enable students to successfully gain A level qualifications.

**RQ5: What is the purpose of a textbook and a geography education?**

Textbooks are one of a number of resources which feature in the resource ecology of the classroom, they are rich with legitimate knowledge as a result of being reviewed, revised and endorsed. Textbooks have a dual function, as a commercial product and educational resource. Authors suggest that this tension drives decision-making and introduces constraints which they must overcome. Authors note that textbooks which are structured according to examination specifications,

should provide good coverage and frame subject content in a way that adds value, supporting teaching, learning and assessment. Authors can also provide opportunities for thinking geographically, enquiry and discussion. More broadly, authors agree with ALCAB (DfE, 2014a) that textbooks can play a key role in providing students with a good geography education.

### **9.2.1 Professional capital**

My research findings suggest that authors are intuitive, knowledgeable, well connected and have professional reflexivity developed with time and their experience of teaching, examining and research. Writing a textbook, as the following quote suggests, is not about making ‘correct’ choices, instead using phronesis and vision to make informed decisions:

*The what, the how and the why of teaching is always up for grabs. There is no one ‘correct’ set of things that students should know; there is no one ‘proper’ way of learning; there are no ‘self-evident’ goals of education. Instead, there are only ever choices.*

(Castree, 2005, p.246)

Their expertise puts authors in a very powerful position to select and legitimise knowledge transmitted in schools. Some of this knowledge comes from the discipline, but much is selected for political, cultural, social and pedagogic reasons (Firth, 2011). Consequently, it is important that authors choose geographical knowledge which can empower young people to think geographically, be able to explain and understand the world and its future, engage in contemporary debates and ‘go beyond the limits of their personal experience’ (Maude, 2016, p.72). However, as textbooks are primarily designed to ensure learners are prepared for their formal examinations, authors are not the only people with agency in this process. ALCAB, the government, assessment organisations and publishers all have a great influence over the content and structure of specifications and how this is presented to students in endorsed textbooks. An awareness of the potential conflicts of interest between these players and the drawbacks of endorsed textbooks are essential for authors. For

example, knowing that texts can date quickly can be ameliorated by selecting places which are not rapidly changing.

Authors draw on their professional capital to make informed decisions and create resources which add value to the education of A level Geography students. Each aspect of professional capital: human, social and decisional capital are now discussed in turn.

### **9.2.2 *Human capital***

One of the authors likens writing a textbook to creating a jigsaw. Hirst and Peters (1974) use the same analogy for the curriculum, both analogies hint at the complexity of the processes of curriculum-making and textbook writing. Writing a textbook requires expertise across Bernstein's (2000) three message systems and is learnt through professional practice: marking examination papers, teaching in the classroom and sharing knowledge within a number of professional subcultures, with fellow examiners, geographers and teachers. In terms of human capital, it is important that authors have a rich knowledge base to support writing high-quality textbooks. However, an author's accumulated knowledge is much more than a source of subject content, it is an understanding of the most suitable content for a particular context, the nuances of how students learn and the interaction between curriculum and assessment at A level.

This study confirms that textbook authors spend a significant amount of time reading to understand the aims, objectives and subject content of the examination specifications and sample assessment material before they create any content. Applying Bernsteinian theorisation, this time is required to make sense of the instructional discourse and decide on the appropriate approach to pedagogise knowledge into school geography in the form of a textbook. With a concern for subject content and pedagogy, authors, working as recontextualisation agents, must think about the form, pitch, sequence, pace and complexity of this knowledge and be able to effectively sift through increasing volumes of available knowledge and make appropriate choices.

To make the task of writing more difficult, messaging from the government in the 2014 reforms required the nature of school knowledge to be more challenging and assessment to be more rigorous (Gove, 2014; DfE, 2014a;

Smith, 2014). Authors in this study have a great deal of accumulated knowledge and certainly do not show any evidence of ‘knowledge blindness’, which Maton (2014a, p.7) suggests is common if knowledge is viewed as ‘undifferentiated... interchangeable packets of information’. Whether this is a result of authors working within a multi-paradigmatic discipline (Livingstone, 1992) or in communities of practice with geographers and educators who have been socialised differently within the subject is an issue worth further investigation.

### **9.2.3 *Social capital***

All authors, even those full-time in the classroom, write in relative isolation at home. A rich professional network is therefore a key mechanism by which authors communicate, collaborate and share their ideas. Network spaces can be virtual. However, face-to-face networking opportunities are more social, engaging and have the potential to include more community members and enhance feelings of belonging (Wenger, 1998). For the geography educator community, networking opportunities take place at face-to-face meetings and training events put on by the Geographical Association, RGS-IBG, assessment organisations, Multi-Academy Trusts and others. These opportunities allow members of a community of practice to get together to listen and learn from each other.

Social capital is rooted in experience and depends on the members having a shared language to be able to discuss, accept and validate new knowledge. Collaboration is key to developing professional capital within communities of practice. Castree (2005) makes the point that when individual choices are made and agreed within an epistemic community, they then become common sense and fixed. Authors therefore ‘have an awesome responsibility’ (Hooks, 1994, cited in Castree, 2005, p.246) ‘to reflect critically and frequently on what university (and pre-university) teaching is about’ (Castree, 2005, p.246). Authors perceive the importance of other geographers to their professional practice. They value working in collaboration with others in their communities of practice. Authors have multiple professional sub-cultures and speak with empathy on behalf of each of the groups to which they belong. The data suggests that connections developed between universities and schools are two-way relationships and that authors, teachers and academics benefit from these forms of knowledge exchange.

However, there are a few individuals who provide a significant amount of inspiration to others. These people are often, but not always, academic geographers or geography educators working at and crossing the school-university boundary and taking a research-led approach (Castree *et al.*, 2007). The professional communities in which authors belong are vital spaces where ideas, theories and developments for school education are tested, accepted and sometimes refuted. Powerful knowledge is such a theory. It is contested by social constructionists who believe that children can create new knowledge, that the nature of knowledge is not always hierarchically structured and that everyday knowledge has value (Beck 2013; Roberts, 2014; Young, 2016), see Section 2.2.4 for a discussion.

The authors and ALCAB member in this study note how a number of bridges have been made and remade between school and university. Their hope is that these bridges continue to be reinforced, through individual and professional agency between universities and their local school network. The ‘fossilisation’ of geography as a school subject (Castree, 2011) was blamed for decreasing geography student numbers in schools and a reduction in the number of academic geography departments (Hill and Jones, 2010). Education policy and guidance provided by ALCAB has gone some way to redressing this situation (Evans, 2014). By understanding the nature of the school-university divide in relation to the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘where’ of geography teaching and learning, Hill and Jones (2010) suggest opportunities for co-operation and collaboration between school and academic geographers. These are still as relevant now, even if issues of time, reward and budget can discourage boundary crossing activities (Butt and Collins, 2018). Bridging the divide is important for prospective students planning to continue their education at university (Chang and Kidman, 2019, p.2) and for academics maintaining student numbers to keep their departments open and thriving (Butt and Collins, 2018; Pykett and Smith 2009).

#### **9.2.4 *Decisional capital***

Authors are content design experts (Lee and Catling, 2016a, p.342) who rely on expertise from a number of professional roles; as classroom practitioners, assessors, teacher trainers and as authors. These roles provide textbook authors

with a deep knowledge and understanding of the geography curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Making connections between these three systems supports authors in writing text, selecting data, constructing activities and modelling examination questions and answers. It also helps authors to become critical, adaptive and reflective practitioners. For example, authors agree that a good geography education can expose students to a world full of places, is contemporary, relevant and inspirational and can prepare students for life after school (Ofsted, 2011; Evans, 2014). Authors also understand why this and the wider purpose of education is so important and this again feeds into the complex decision-making process of textbook writing. As Timperley (2013, p.5) suggests, adaptive experts ‘are driven by the moral imperative to promote the engagement, learning, and well-being of *each* of their students’. This is a particular strength of A level textbook authors, who understand that their readers may not necessarily continue a formal geography education after their A level examinations, but will continue to be global citizens, with a future in the world in which they studied in school geography.

In terms of decisional capital, the research findings and discussion support the idea that authors can achieve agency. This is evident in the authors’ choices of knowledge, pedagogy and moral messaging and is facilitated by access to a wide range of sources of disciplinary knowledge and real-world evidence. Agency is also used to empower students to debate the nature of knowledge, research their own places and construct their own knowledge. In order to meet ALCAB’s guidance that A level subject should be ‘more challenging’ and ‘rigorous’ (Gibb, 2014; DfE, 2014c), authors were given the space to pitch content at a higher standard and bring school and academic geography closer.

Knowledge, gained across Shulman’s (1986) five content-specific domains (see Section 2.2.2), supports authors to make effective decisions about textbook content. This know-how or situated understanding takes years to accumulate and is furthered by working in partnerships, departments and communities of practice, where collaboration is an important aspect of negotiating, defining and disseminating new subject content. Inexperienced authors may feel a great weight of expectation to perform, but they should recognise that their situated understanding will continue to develop with time.

Equally, teachers should not assume that a textbook can act as the curriculum, although they ‘are a key aspect of improving the enacted curriculum...presented to students in the classroom’ (Oates, 2014, p.3). Textbooks should be a key feature of a rich classroom resource ecology, with the teacher taking the most important role as active curriculum-maker. With ‘little research evidence on how textbooks are used in the classroom’ (Chapman and Wurr, 2000, p.123) and limited research on the process of textbook writing as told by authors themselves (Lee and Catling, 2016a; 2016b), there is much that can be done in geography education research to shine a brighter light on the work and expertise of textbook authors.

### **9.2.5 *Bernstein and the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF)***

The context of my case study is the pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF). A level Geography textbook authors mediate knowledge from official educational policy and the parent discipline for use by school teachers and students. This study concludes that authors are intuitive, critical and reflective practitioners who draw on accumulated knowledge and shared expertise from communities of practice to decide on the most suitable subject content for inclusion in a textbook. Appreciating that universities are the source of new disciplinary knowledge and ALCAB guidance has increased the proportion of such geographical thought into the A level subject content, authors worked hard to recontextualise knowledge during the 2014 reforms. This process was made more difficult by political discourse pushing for more rigorous and challenging school qualifications (Gove, 2014; DfE, 2014a; Smith, 2014), without clarity or expectation about how this would be implemented. Disciplinary geography is challenging due to the diversity of ways in which knowledge is produced, defined and structured, the multiplicity of disciplinary methods and prevailing paradigms and the complexity and abstract nature of knowledge. This is again compounded by the different underlying structuring principles of knowledge in the human and physical geography sub-disciplines. All the authors discussed the introduction of two extended case studies of place which can be used to stretch and challenge students, while introducing a range of qualitative and quantitative data sources for exploration. Several of the authors were critical of the inclusion of geographical concepts and approaches (such as phenomenology) which were felt to be too abstract or

complex for the average A level student. This was also raised as a concern by the ALCAB member during interview. Authors discussed certain strategies which could be employed to reduce the semantic density of text when introducing new content. Paul's use of familiar places to exemplify an abstract idea like emotional attachments to place draws out the idea that authors can change a textbook from being cerebral and inaccessible, not by removing abstract and complex content, but by carefully recontextualising content with vision and deliberate practice.

### **9.3 Plans for dissemination**

During my PhD journey, I devised a plan to disseminate my research. My initial plan involved sharing my knowledge about place with A level Geography teachers and my research strategy, methods and initial findings with geography educators and the education community. In 2015, I published 'How can we better represent the Middle East?' (Rawlings Smith, 2015), an article suggesting different pedagogical approaches to teaching about distant places, drawing on my experience of living in Abu Dhabi. After extensive reading about place, I saw a gap in the A level publication market for a title focused on the core Changing Places topic to support geography teachers preparing to teach new content in September 2016. The Geographical Association (GA) bought into the idea and, with help from two other authors, our book was published (Rawlings Smith *et al.*, 2016). The GA then invited me to lead sessions on Changing Places at national subject update events for geography teachers and write a chapter focused on Post 16 Geography for the GA's Secondary Geography Handbook (Rawlings Smith, 2017). These experiences focus on the dissemination of knowledge via professional geography education channels. I have also shared my research approach, methods and findings in more academic settings; including at the RGS-IBG International Annual Conference, the Geography Teacher Educators Conference and a range of Higher Education Institutions including the Universities of Birmingham, Leicester and Warwick (my public outputs are presented in Appendix H).

The dissemination of my research has already generated impact and I have received positive feedback from a range of educators, including Field Study Council (FSC) staff, school teachers, PhD students and fellow teacher trainers.

After leading training with FSC staff at their headquarters, I facilitated a workshop with Dr Phil Wood at the 2016 GA Annual Conference, focusing on the use of lesson study and Q methodology. A number of FSC staff came to both events and discussed how they would apply in their own teaching some of my ideas about curriculum and pedagogy. More recently, Dr Simon Oakes presented a lecture titled 'Place meanings and representations' at the 2019 GA Annual Conference. In his paper, he shared ideas about the opportunities and challenges for creative curriculum-making in A-level Geography with geography teachers and referred to my research findings in terms of agency and the selection and representation of place. After submission, I plan to disseminate my research more widely to the education community in publications recognised internationally, focusing on the use of Q methodology in educational research, the professional capital of authors and the benefits of communities of practice.

#### **9.4 Limitations of this study and further research**

This study, informed by constructivist epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective, set out to answer the research questions detailed in Section 1.4, exploring textbook author expertise, knowledge and perspectives through the use of questionnaires, interviews and Q methodology. My research provides new findings regarding the perspectives, knowledge and expertise of geography textbook authors, an area of geography education research which is underexplored and undervalued (Lee and Catling, 2016a). My exploratory research, focusing on the professional capital of A level Geography authors, highlights the added complexity and assessment-focused nature of endorsed textbooks written to support A level qualifications. This makes my findings particularly relevant for authors, publishers, assessment organisations, as well as the wider education community who recontextualise knowledge. That being said, my study has a number of limitations.

As you would expect from a study following an interpretivist approach, my sample size is small. Therefore, research findings are not generalisable (Geertz, 1973). As a geography educator, I am well-placed to gain access to the authors who participated in this study. Future research on this topic might be limited if I cannot achieve a similar level of access to participants. Of the

population of 39 A level Geography textbooks authors, only nine were participants in this study. If I had spoken to more authors from the population of 39, it is possible that they would have expressed different views than those recorded here. However, such an approach would reduce the likelihood of anonymity, as discussed in my research design (Section 3.6). Also, data from interviews is subjective and must be taken at face value, making it hard to verify (see Section 3.7.2). The stance of each author is unique and their interview data has potential to be selective, embellished and political. Selectivity may be a result of authors not remembering or choosing not to talk about particular issues. Embellishment may increase the significance of certain ideas; a result of a particular agenda being played out which is not explicitly stated.

Gaining insights from authors proved to be an incredibly rich source of data. Therefore, one of the most significant limitations of this research was the need to narrow the scope of the study to provide enough space to fully explore the perspectives of the authors. Analysing data from authors, rather than teachers of students meant that some data was not utilised in this study. I would have liked to interview additional members of ALCAB to develop my analysis. However, having already discounted student and teacher voices, there was little scope to collect more data or space to set out their perspectives in my Research Findings.

Another limitation of this study is that my sample is exclusively authors of A level Geography textbooks. This does not mean that the authors in this study do not have experiences of writing at other key stages, but rather that the focus of the research was case-specific on A level Geography. Consequently, my findings are not transferable to other key stages. Further research may well show parallels in the data where authors of textbooks focused on other key stages, such as GCSE, are interviewed. Future research could pursue such an agenda or develop the exploratory findings of my study, but with an explanatory research design. It would have been impossible to fully understand the complex process of writing, as described by textbook authors, if it were not for my own experience and research.

Bringing the research question focused on social capital into my study during data analysis meant that discussions about people in the community of practice who inspire and support authors were not fully developed during the

interview. Adding the additional research question was a wise decision in terms of providing space for coded data, as it brought a richness to the data findings and a completeness to my conceptual framework.

There is a call for more detailed methodological explanations in geography education research (Corney, 2000; Butt, 2010; Catling and Butt, 2016). Consequently, I have fully explained my choice of methods which include a Q-sort, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Using Q methodology in geography education research is innovative. It required the careful construction and piloting of Q-set statements prior to the main data collection phase. (see Section 3.7.3). My initial research objective was to compare the subjective views of authors, teachers and students about the concept of place. Future research could develop the use of Q methodology as the stimulus for the entire interview in order to explore in more depth subjective views about particular concepts. These concepts could be drawn from the discipline, the formal curriculum or from particular agendas such as sustainability or Britishness.

Textbooks are just one way of translating curriculum requirements (Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991). Luke *et al.* (1989, p.246) are quite right to raise concerns that textbooks provide the ‘authorised version’ of knowledge, revered more than alternative versions of knowledge, including that of the teacher. They also encourage teaching to the test and the narrowing of the curriculum. Authors agree with the Publishers Association’s Guidance 1.3 which states that textbooks should not be narrowly targeted on particular specifications (PA, 2015b). Therefore, there is scope for research about the costs and benefits of endorsed textbooks on teaching, learning and assessment.

There is much more scope for research about textbook quality, use, and pedagogy with publishers, authors and teachers, due to the increasing amount of research and political discussion on the use, purpose and qualities of effective textbooks (Maughan *et al.*, 2015) and the role of textbooks in raising academic standards and our international standing (Oates, 2014; Askew *et al.*, 2010). The amount of research focused on textbooks is far greater than the amount of research with textbook authors or with teachers and their use of textbooks in the classroom. Research by Lee and Catling (2016a; 2016b) has somewhat made up for the former, but there are still opportunities to better understand how authors mediate

the instructional discourse and teachers mediate textbook content. In 1998, Marsden suggested that textbooks remained under-researched as a result of the anti-textbook ideology in the UK. Around the same time, Lambert (2000, p.108) was concerned that ‘a woefully under-theorised aspect of pedagogy (teaching with textbooks) continues to be propagated in geography classrooms’. More recently, Jo and Bednarz (2009, p.10) suggest that ‘research can help teachers effectively use textbooks by providing them with information about their nature and quality’. Yet textbook pedagogy still remains under-theorised. Future research exploring whether texts are actively used in class, the value of texts, the accessibility of information in texts and place selection would be particularly useful. Furthermore, it would be informative to know whether recent political rhetoric is changing teacher attitudes and textbook use in England, as is the case in high-performing jurisdictions such as Singapore (Oates, 2014; Gibb, 2014; Winter 2015).

Previous studies with a focus on geography curriculum and textbooks have explored content change at GCSE (Roberts, 2008), the representation and selection of places in textbooks (Hopkin, 2001) and the knowledge and skills gap between school and university (Pointon, 2008). There is very little evidence which explores how students understand the nature of knowledge, especially if we consider that some knowledge about the world is temporal or provisional, subject to modification, or not yet understood (Knight, 2007). However, this can be viewed as an opportunity to compare the perspectives of students and teachers in order to inform classroom practice.

With no significant literature about the revised A level subject content (DfE, 2014a), students perspectives on place or teachers’ use of communities of practice, my PhD research is a useful launch pad for a range of further research projects. Disseminating this further research could guide teachers towards a suitable pedagogical approach to deal with ontological issues around knowledge production and recontextualisation, support professional development by highlighting the opportunities and benefits of social capital and support further school-academy networking opportunities at the University of Leicester.

## **9.5 Recommendations for policy and practice and further research**

At the time of writing (2019), politicians continue to call for GCSE qualifications to be scrapped and A levels to be reformed again. This, only three years after the new A levels were first taught seems rather premature and goes against the idea of curriculum stability (Oates, 2014). If we are to review and improve textbooks then curriculum policy in the UK needs to stabilise. Authors build up a wealth of practical, disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge about writing textbooks. For senior examiners part of the assessment process is to contribute to the examiners' report published after each examination series to support teachers, students and examiners involved in assessment. In the same way, publishers should request feedback from their writing teams to feed forward, to review and improve future publications.

While discussing the concept of place in school geography, Rawling (2018b, p.59) concludes that 'teachers, resource writers and those working in the qualifications and assessment system all need time and CPD opportunities to appreciate the range of opportunities in the national requirements and the possibilities for implementation'. For years, assessment organisations have provided training opportunities where examiners disseminate their knowledge of assessment to teachers. Yet, the same mechanism is not available for authors to disseminate their knowledge of curriculum making to teachers. This highlights the priority given to assessment over curriculum at A level. Such training is available at KS3, but rarely features for the examination year groups.

At times of curriculum change, the experience of dealing with new subject content in preparation for writing a textbook is the same process which teachers experience when preparing to teach. As authors go through this process earlier than teachers, there are content-specific lessons learnt which could be valuable to teachers when shared. This is particularly important if we consider the rising number of non-specialists teaching geography in schools, particularly in the more deprived areas of the UK (Sibieta, 2018). There is also the potential for publishers to develop bespoke CPD for potential and practicing textbook authors. This could, for example, improve first submissions by new writers and remind authors about particular aspects of writing such as student misconceptions, content selection and current thinking about knowledge production and transmission.

Since the last round of A level reforms in 2014, more bridges have been built between teacher networks and university departments. This has been spurred on by academics, including those on the ALCAB panel, as well as teacher networks connected with the Royal Geographical Society and the Geographical Association. Additional work is required to strengthen these bridges, to build on projects such as ‘Connecting Geography’ (Collins, 2019) which is developing stronger links between Birmingham University’s academic geographers and geography trainee teachers.

## **9.6 Concluding remarks**

My research set out to explore the professional capital of authors who curricularise and legitimise knowledge about a key geographical concept (place) in endorsed A level geography textbooks, as expressed by the views of nine authors. Taken together, a Bernsteinian approach to the pedagogic device and the professional capital of authors make for a powerful conceptual framework to explore textbook production from the perspective of the author. All the authors in my study recognise the complexity of writing a textbook, especially with the dual focus on curriculum content and assessment requirements associated with an endorsed A level textbook. Authors are expert practitioners who are all inspired by other geographers and draw on accumulated and shared knowledge of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy to write effectively. They recognise the importance of being active members of several communities of practice in which they have visibility and institutional positions which they can exploit to negotiate, define and share knowledge in the field of school geography.

Textbooks are one of many educational resource, which take on greater importance at times of curriculum change, when they provide a validated source of knowledge which teachers can mediate for use with their students. A recent move by Pearson (BBC, 2019) to stop printing textbooks in the US resulted in a backlash in the UK and the publisher quickly announced that paper textbooks would continue to be printed to meet demand. Authors suggest that textbooks add value to a student’s geographical education because subject content is conceptually framed, knowledge is clearly defined, discussed and exemplified and their teachers are supported through textbook pedagogy and assessment

modelling. Textbooks do suffer from built-in-obsolescence as they reflect contemporary society. However, this is not a significant issue as they are most needed when a revised specification is first published and teachers require initial support.

By providing guidance on A level subject content, ALCAB successfully narrowed the divide between disciplinary and school geography. However, by developing subject content without significant collaboration with assessment organisations and school teachers, ALCAB failed to draw on a rich body of curriculum and assessment expertise. Going forward, now that ALCAB has been dissolved, a lack of formal engagement, at policy level, between the two geographies may allow the knowledge divide to widen again. At an institutional level, connections between academics and their local schools, if maintained, will continue to bridge the two fields and improve dialogue and knowledge exchange between academics, teachers and students. Direct access to disciplinary knowledge is empowering for young people who go on to study geography at university, as it supports them in understanding the complexity of the world. For all A level students including the majority who do not go on to study geography, it is an induction into knowledge production and higher education, opening their eyes to opportunities at and beyond university.

## Appendices

### Appendix A Participant information sheets, consent and ethics



#### RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

**Outline of the research:** Understanding conceptions about place in school geography

**Who is the researcher?**

**Name:** Emma Rawlings Smith

**Institution:** University of Leicester

**Contact details:** ejkcrs1@le.ac.uk

**What will my participation in the research involve?**

Authors will first be asked to complete a short-written survey focused on the concept of place. They will then have the opportunity to share their thoughts about the process of writing about place in A level geography textbooks, during a semi-structured interview. There will also be a card sort exercise to be completed at the interview stage. The purpose of the interview is to follow up on some of the ideas revealed in the written survey and explore particular ideas in more detail, if they are happy to be involved and give consent.

**Will there be any benefits in taking part?**

Taking part gives authors an opportunity to reflect on the process of writing a textbook and their own conceptions of place.

**Will there be any risks in taking part?**

There are minimal risks in taking part.

**What happens if I decide I don't want to take part during the actual research study, or decide I don't want the information I've given to be used?**

At any request during the data collection stage, information can be extracted from the research study and not used.

**How will you ensure that my contribution is anonymous?**

Data will be collected and analysed anonymously, no reference to actual names will be used at any point in the research process.

**Please note that your confidentiality and anonymity cannot be assured if, during the research, it comes to light you are involved in illegal or harmful behaviour, which I may disclose to the appropriate authorities.**

## RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

**Title of research project:** Understanding students' conceptions about place in school geography

**Name of researcher:** Emma Rawlings Smith

**Information Box:** As part of a PhD in Education I am exploring students' conceptions of the different places they study in school geography. I am also asking textbook writers about how they conceive place and the choices they make about places during the writing process. Data in the form of a survey, card sort and interview will be collected.

I confirm that I have read and understand the information box for the research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Yes	No
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I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during data collection, without giving any reason.

Yes	No
-----	----

I agree to take part in this research project and for the data to be used as the researcher sees fit, including publication.

Yes	No
-----	----

Name of author:

Signature:

Date:

Name of researcher: Emma Rawlings Smith

Signature:

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017



09/05/2016

**Ethics Reference:** 6175-ejkers1-education

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Emma-Jane Katherine Claire Rawlings Smith

Department: Education

Research Project Title: Representing the World: Conceptions on learning about place in school geography

Dear Emma-Jane Katherine Claire Rawlings Smith,

**RE: Ethics review of Research Study application**

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for Sociology; Politics and IR; Lifelong Learning; Criminology; Economics and the School of Education has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1. Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2. Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues: We wish you all the best with your study.

3. General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4. Reporting requirements after ethical approval You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5. Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely, Dr. Laura Brace Chair

## Appendix B Blank questionnaire: All about Place

1. Explain why it is/isn't important for students to have a good geographical understanding of their own locality?

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2. What do you understand by the concept of a **distant place**?

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3. Explain why it is/isn't important to learn about **distant places** in geography.

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4. Explain whether you think **place** should be investigated in A Level geography as a stand-alone unit.

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5. Significance means '*the quality of being worthy of attention*'. Describe at least six **characteristics** of **significant places** that make them worthy of study in geography.

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6. Which places do you think are significant/worthy of study at A Level? Think about places at a range of scales from a locality to whole city, region or even an entire country. Add them to the following table:

Significant places in the UK				
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Significant places in Europe				
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Significant places worldwide				
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.

7. Describe how you have developed knowledge about different places (source of material, experiences etc).

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8. Explain how we can avoid **stereotypes** and **misconceptions** of the places we study in geography?

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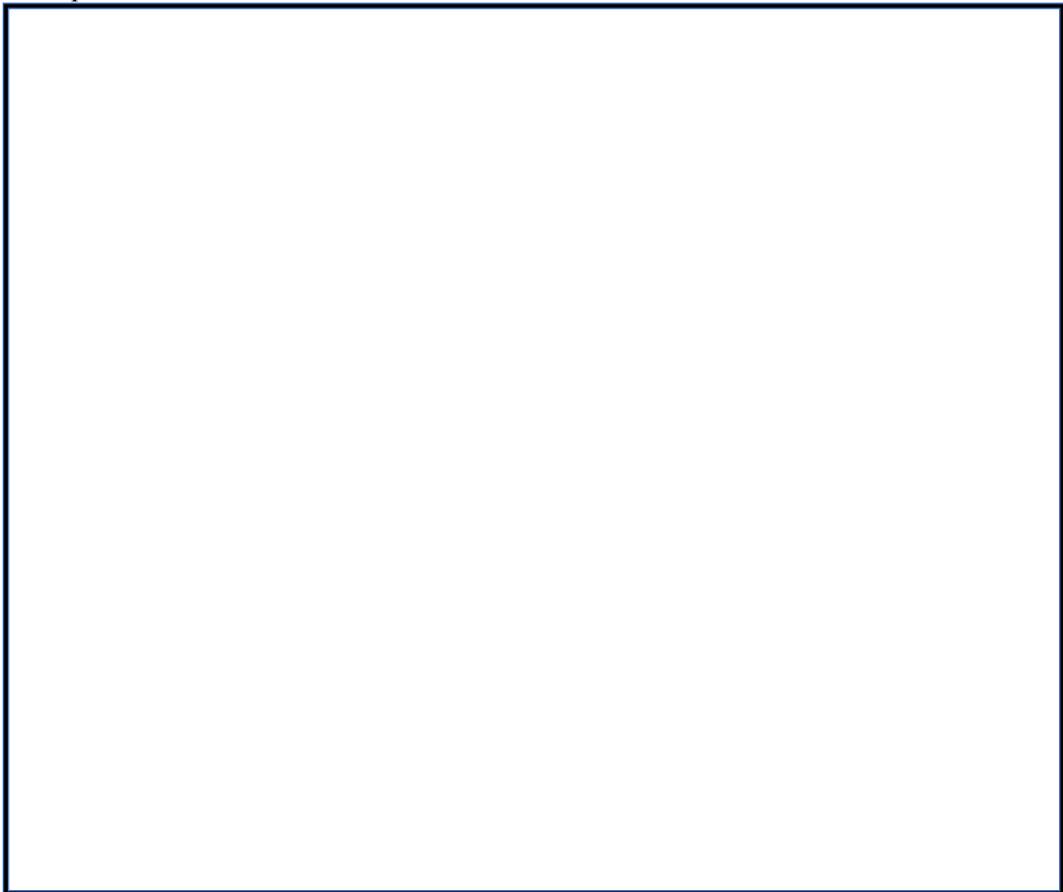
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9. Geographers study people and places, define the word **PLACE**.

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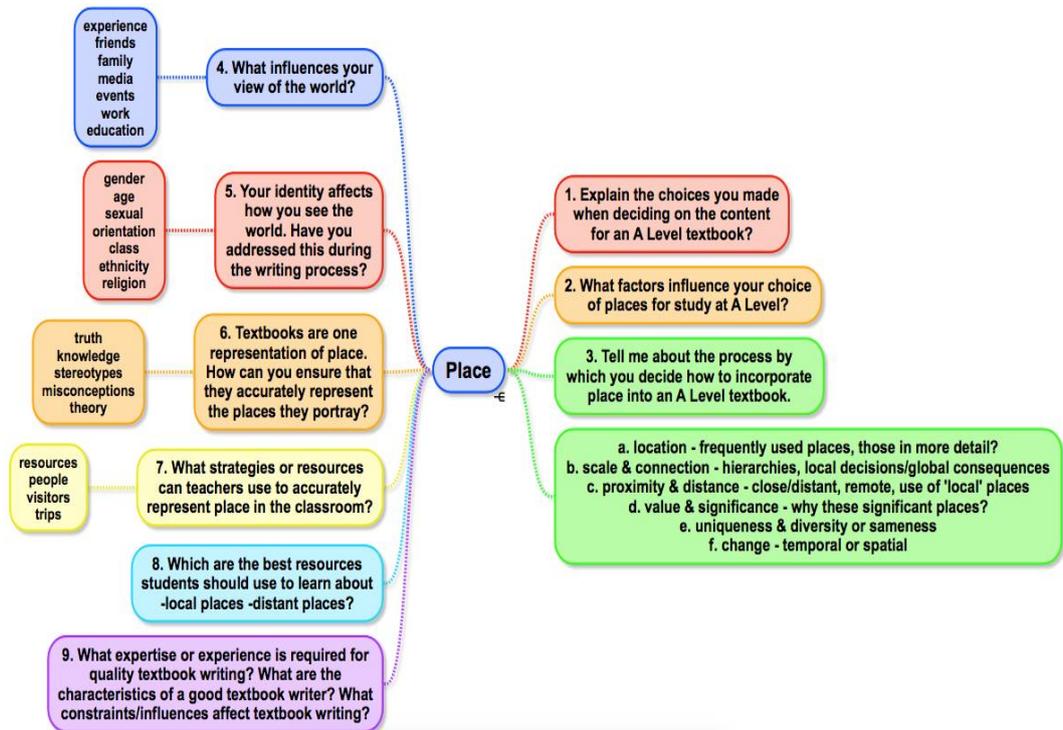
10. In the frame below, **draw** a picture of a **successful place** you are familiar with. It could be at the scale of a village centre or High Street. Include in your sketch aspects of the built/natural environment, **label** what different people are doing and what they think about the place.



*Thank you for helping with my PhD research – Emma Rawlings Smith*

## Appendix C Interview schedule

### Pilot interview guide for geography teachers/educators



### Final Questionnaire and Interview Question

Issues	Questions	Follow-up questions	Justification for question choice
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain that the interview is one aspect of the data which will inform my research, it will be short and focused.</li> <li>- Teachers will be asked for permission for the interview to be recorded, this is to ease the process of transcribing later</li> <li>- Teachers will remain anonymous, can create their own pseudonym, all responses are confidential and data will be destroyed after use</li> <li>- Interviewee might find questions challenging, no right or wrong answers (My interested is in opinions/experiences)</li> <li>- Interviewee can ask for clarification, questions to be reframed or leave a question unanswered, interview can be stopped at any point</li> <li>- it will be useful for teachers to have their A Level Programme of Study with them to help with recall</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Starter</b> A key aspect of geography is studying places, give me your own definition of the concept PLACE</p>			
Places studied	Which countries are studied in A Level geography?	Why are these particular countries chosen? Did you create a matrix to check that you have a balance of places, regions, themes to teach?	An opportunity to outline places chosen and reason for choice
Reasons why	What factors influenced your choice of places for study at A Level?	How do you structure the study of place? Key questions, following a textbook, thematic coverage etc. or as set out in specification. What is the reasoning for this? How do you	The opportunity to show geographical thinking behind curriculum development choices
	How is the curriculum constructed? (theme-based, concept-based, country-based) What teaching strategies and learning opportunities do you specifically employ when teaching about places?		To understand what theoretical framework students use to group countries

<p>Significance</p> <p>Resource use</p> <p>Every day experiences</p> <p>Representations</p>	<p>What if any support did you use when curriculum-making?</p> <p>How do you think the study of place has changed, if at all, since the recent revision of the A Level specifications?</p> <p>Which countries are studied in more detail over several lessons? What was the context?</p> <p>Explain which places (in your view) are geographically significant and should be studied in school geography. What are the characteristics of significant places?</p> <p>What different resources do you regularly use in class when studying about places? (a pre-written tick list is available for this)</p> <p>How do you include student experience when you teach about places?</p> <p>To what extent do you use cross-curricular links when you teach about places?</p> <p>To what extent do you have links with other schools and other people in different places?</p> <p>How is this place presented in the media? Are there common stereotypes/ misconceptions about this place that you know about? What are they?</p>	<p>group countries when you are describing their level of development, income or location in the world?</p> <p>i.e. GA support, journal articles, TES website</p> <p>How does the specification content influence the decisions you make when developing a Post 16 Curriculum?</p> <p>Why are these places worth studying? Do you compare and contrast and look for interconnections with where your school is located? Are there places specific to your students in your curriculum?</p> <p>Are these resources bias? representative? accurate? up-to-date? Are there any that do not or are old and need replacing?</p> <p>How do you develop students' geographical imaginations and make them as realistic as possible?</p> <p>Which subjects? What aspects of literacy, numeracy, ICT and creativity do you incorporate into learning about places?</p> <p>What learning opportunities occur beyond the classroom? Study trips? Exchanges? How do you try to present a balanced view of the world? Are these fair representations?</p>	<p>To get an understanding of what external sources of info are used in the department</p> <p>To see how strong the influence of the specification is on curriculum-making</p> <p>To understand why particular countries are chosen for study.</p> <p>To find out the variety of resources commonly used in class or is a range of perspectives or one perspective regularly used i.e. textbook</p> <p>To understand how teaching about places can provide links across school and beyond</p> <p>To get an understanding of whether places and people are fairly represented without stereotypes or bias</p>
<p>Context of influence</p>	<p>Where do you think your view of the world and different places comes from?</p> <p>Where else do you learn about different places in the world? Which other places do you think should be studied in geography?</p> <p>How important do you think it is to learn about different places in geography? Why?</p>	<p>How has your view been influenced by experience/ travel/ friends/ media/ holidays/ other people?</p> <p>Give some examples of discussions or visits in the last three years which have influenced your understanding of geography</p>	<p>To find out teachers to identify where their geographical imagination comes from</p> <p>Tries to unpick whether the teachers' perspective has been shaped by other people/ events/ experiences</p> <p>To understand the value teachers put on studying different places</p>
<p><b>Closure</b> Is there anything else you would like to add? Thank educators for their time.</p>			

## Appendix D Written narratives for each key themes

Written narratives describing the key theme ‘know-what’

<b>Linda</b>	<p>The sources of information I used involved an element of serendipity, luck and opportunism.</p> <p>I returned to my University notes to refresh my memory and re-read some cultural geography.</p> <p>I bought a few books and found that large chunks of them are freely available on online.</p> <p>I plundered my back catalogue of GA journals including Geography and Teaching Geography.</p> <p>I downloaded other articles, paying attention to bibliographies as a further source of information.</p>
<b>Olly</b>	<p>It is important for students to be aware of things from another perspective.</p> <p>Reading a range of literature, going to NGOs, plumbing the depths.</p> <p>Confirming what others said and giving you another line to investigate.</p> <p>Not just relying on the first thing you came across on the Guardian website.</p> <p>This is what this writer is seeing, but be aware there may be other perspectives.</p>
<b>Rebus</b>	<p>A late addition to the spec, I knew nothing, the turnaround was a week.</p> <p>I knew I could get enough information to make it half-decent.</p> <p>It was the same exam board, I know how they think.</p> <p>It did not work as well as I would have liked, but it was very much OK, that will do.</p> <p>If I just had more time.</p>
<b>Jem</b>	<p>Research and reading of academic papers and books provided university level knowledge.</p> <p>I knew the case studies I wanted, not a repetition of previous ones with data updated.</p> <p>Concepts named in the DfE subject content provided a useful framework for case studies.</p> <p>That seems like lazy writing. Emphasis, structure and a clear sequence of design.</p> <p>Once written, checks for length, specification match, key terms, accessibility and so on.</p>
<b>Ash</b>	<p>My geography is a conceptual scaffold, a bit out-of-date. I try to update now and again.</p> <p>Made up of Doreen Massey, David Harvey, Manuel Castells and Actor-Network Theory.</p> <p>I float around in the collective commons and find myself in all kinds of places.</p> <p>British geography is so inward-looking with very Eurocentric assumptions.</p> <p>I hope my writing is as post-colonial and feminist for a white man writing.</p>
<b>Vic</b>	<p>I had a cab driver from Kyrgyzstan. I talk to people from different countries.</p> <p>Stories of peoples’ lives are quite fascinating and I pump them for information.</p> <p>I try and give a kind of voice to countries that do not always make it onto the curriculum.</p> <p>I always try and address different sorts of identity in my writing.</p> <p>Geography is still very male, women should have a voice because they offer an alternative.</p>
<b>Sam</b>	<p>You have got the idea of awe and wonder, which can be used to get into geography.</p> <p>I read constantly, I have hundreds of books. I pick up quite a few news stories.</p> <p>You sort of pick up information about places and soak it up and it stays.</p> <p>That often leads me wanting to find more and turning them into resources.</p> <p>When I was writing the book, quite a lot was reworking of stuff I had done before.</p>
<b>Paul</b>	<p>New material, valuable information, absolutely superb and ready-made.</p> <p>Sourced from local authorities, development agencies and the pages of the Sunday Times.</p> <p>Trying to reach all sorts of students in different ways. Providing a case study or a head start.</p> <p>Across the abilities, you want them to go away with something from a double-page spread.</p> <p>We need to make it contemporary, make it real. The world is incredibly complex.</p>
<b>Ron</b>	<p>I looked at the sample questions set by the board and thought about the places to use.</p> <p>The biggest constraint in the book was space. The content was going to be fairly superficial.</p> <p>Online information and some stuff from the paper. I read more academic papers.</p> <p>They gave me more knowledge, some diagrams, a better understanding of the topic.</p> <p>I didn’t use websites put together by teachers. I wanted to find the things for myself.</p>

Written narratives describing the key theme ‘know-where’

<b>Linda</b>	<p>I decided a personal journey around my own local area would make a good case study.          To hear about change, I talked to older members of the community.          Our understandings about different places are subjective, situated and partial.          We can learn from history how not to represent place and how not to behave.          The best way to fairly represent place is to use a wide range of up-to-date data.</p>
<b>Olly</b>	<p>Students ought to know a series of national metrics, extreme values where people are at risk.          The fastest eroding coastline, the highest tidal range and places where people are at risk.          You use examples and particular locations to get a conceptual point of view across.          It is quite different to when you go there, it comes down to a more human scale.          Give students an appreciation of a wide range of places and possibilities.</p>
<b>Rebus</b>	<p>The best places are where you have experience of that place.          I get most of my knowledge from textbooks, from the internet.          It’s very difficult to find information about a lot of places.          You are less likely to choose it, it is going to be missed.          The students are going to have a partial view of the world.</p>
<b>Jem</b>	<p>Some places are carved in stone in the Department for Education’s subject content.          Other places are fixed by Awarding Organisations, yet change with each specification draft.          Places should be representative and diverse, with coverage from the local to the distant.          There was a quake near Pamanukan in Indonesia, undocumented in the media.          Difficult access prevents more-remote locations from inclusion in decision-making.</p>
<b>Ash</b>	<p>Novelists are meant to write about what they know, because it is better for the book.          I use my professional judgement to determine important places.          I choose examples I like, this gives me confidence and I think that comes across.          If I enjoy the process, as in any aspect of education, then you get a better outcome.          I write endlessly about the Isle of Arran. It is my most favourite place in the world.</p>
<b>Vic</b>	<p>Without making links between places, students end up with a polka dot view of the world.          I don’t think any geography textbook author should write about places they have not been to.          That is an absolutely golden rule, so how do you get yourself into a real place?          I often use real research and academic research papers with transcribed interviews.          If I paint this picture of a place, then students can imagine it.</p>
<b>Sam</b>	<p>Comparing two cities, I liked the idea of Lagos and Leeds with extra payment for photographs.          An interesting personal challenge, it ended up being a city in Argentina I’d not heard of before.          Geography takes people to places which deserve their moment and a bit more attention.          If you can’t find information or if it had been done to death are reasons not to choose a place.          In the end it is selection, one from lots of options rather than discounting ones.</p>
<b>Paul</b>	<p>I was looking for places that had never appeared before in textbooks.          Perceptions of places and examples, places people would know about.          A big hunk of rock, or location with immensely symbolic meaning.          Jerusalem, Buckingham Palace, New York, Glastonbury, Auschwitz.          A locality. Accessible. When talking about place, it is the students’ geography.</p>
<b>Ron</b>	<p>I was looking for places to illustrate key ideas, interesting ones with connections too.          Trying to choose a variety of places, using examples from the UK and more distant places.          I am familiar with the Lake District, it is an area I know well, an area I used to take students.          I chose the Himalayas, more exciting than the Alps, with the highest mountain in the world.          It was in the news due to an avalanche and worked well to illustrate a number of ideas.</p>

Written narratives describing the key theme 'know-who'

<b>Linda</b>	<p>I employed the use of my friends and family. An ex-sociology teacher gave a good steer. So, I read Space and Place and I thought about some of the interesting chapters. The 'Intro to Place' and 'Intro to Research' undergrad textbooks were useful for pitch. I dug out books by key writers who influenced my thinking, such as McDowell. Massey spoke at the GA. Her global sense of place, so dynamic and hard to pin down.</p>
<b>Olly</b>	<p>I listen to the radio, view TV programmes and read a range of literature and go to NGOs. A lot of it is re-reading other people's textbooks and the places they write about. I plump the depths a little bit more to hear a local reporter or read a local newspaper. Students should be aware that there may be other perspectives. I am not sure that textbook publishers would like you to write that.</p>
<b>Rebus</b>	<p>My ability to write a textbook is shaped by my experience of the world. People have different perceptions of place. When teaching, my first resource is the students. I am very much a curriculum-making, enquiry type of person. I like resources that get students to think in a different way.</p>
<b>Jem</b>	<p>My PGCE mentor taught me to keep geography central to everything I did. Subject association conferences provided access to key geography educators. Doreen Massey taught me to keep connections with the parent discipline. Hearing direct from curriculum-makers and Ofsted provided key information about education. Bob Digby and Margaret Roberts provided frameworks for thinking about the school subject.</p>
<b>Ash</b>	<p>I ring people to ask for the latest. I send emails and do actual primary research. What I don't like in other books is when people rewrite a very dry newspaper report. It is not really adding any value. I like people who can write. Keith Hilton's book is poetic in places, you can tell how much he loves the subject. Mick Witherick's books are lovely, he is such a good writer and just uses language well.</p>
<b>Vic</b>	<p>In 1985, I heard Mick Naish speak and within minutes I was hooked on the 16-19 Project. And I still try to keep that alive. Margaret Roberts has given me a lifetime of inspiration, phenomenal, just phenomenal. Owen Jones, GDH Cole, Doreen Massey, Mick Naish and Eleanor Rawling. These people opened up my mind about what geography ought to be about.</p>
<b>Sam</b>	<p>You have to think about broadening your own ideas and bring in other perspectives. When researching places, I started off by asking questions and make links with people. These connections became my field researchers to confirm or flesh out descriptions of places. Taking people to places they would not know about. For London you have the National Park City, Hennig's maps and Dorling's ideas on inequality.</p>
<b>Paul</b>	<p>I have travelled when I have read. I see the geography in what I am reading. I am not going to mention Michael Palin, but I love his programmes, they are fabulous. Two individuals with huge energy and enthusiasm were pivotal in my geography education. I always wanted my students to be enthusiastic, even if they do not read geography at university. My geography department. Absolutely phenomenal, the names, the textbooks the inheritance.</p>
<b>Ron</b>	<p>I am a geographer; a teacher and I am in ITE. I think it is all integral for writing. Where I have visited, what I have read and taught has influenced my view of the world. My son had done a trek to Everest Base Camp, so I had some second-hand knowledge. I have never been to the Himalayas, so I read more academic papers. I wish teachers had the confidence to think that they can do a better job than the textbook.</p>

Written narratives describing the key theme ‘know-how’

<b>Linda</b>	<p>You go through a number of different avenues as you write, I started by reviewing the spec. The content changed through four versions, I had to keep updated and adapt my writing. There were few A Level textbooks about place, I felt I was writing without much guidance. While reviewing the proofs, I drew inspiration and reassurance from teacher training experts. A new curriculum area, the RGS-IBG produced guidance, but it came too late for me.</p>
<b>Olly</b>	<p>Tension. A balance between space and words, depth and sophistication. We teach a theme and we teach it again, each time a little bit more complex. We don't try to unpick the stereotypes, that we might have left remaining. Drop in that issue and perspective, have a good set of points to create rich essay answers. Most case studies are from the UK to allow for fieldwork and the use of maps and GIS.</p>
<b>Rebus</b>	<p>I am a geographer, I am trained to be a geographer and I am a researcher, that helps. You need to write clearly and concisely and have those two things in balance. It is really important to have a kind of story that you weave through. You need a balance between creativity and logicity. It is like a jigsaw except there isn't a jigsaw there.</p>
<b>Jem</b>	<p>The editor provides a template to which you need to stick. An author has decisions to make. Students and teachers don't appreciate the demands and limitations made by publishers. With each additional demand, comes a reduction in the capacity to write freely. Too and fro, editing content for accreditation took longer than the actual writing. Enough information for a nuanced understanding of the world, near and far.</p>
<b>Ash</b>	<p>Good textbook writers work really hard, on behalf of the learner, to show the geography. Writing in a way that draws out central concepts. Certain ideas reinforcing themselves. I favour a good use of case studies and contemporary knowledge that adds value. Using phrases and sentences that bring the text alive. To gain a coherent understanding of the subject.</p>
<b>Vic</b>	<p>Sometimes, we can be in danger of the case study approach. You learn about a concept. Here is a tinted textbox with an example and some activities. Teachers do not always look at them and I think that is the shame. I put more effort into the activities than perhaps I ought to. Much of the value added on comes from doing the activities.</p>
<b>Sam</b>	<p>I learnt quite quickly when teaching a topic, there might be somebody familiar with it. A science teacher who spent time in Antarctica, she came in and talked about her experience. Students tell me their ideas. One was able to tell us how you prepare for a hurricane in Florida. Add another layer of authenticity. That might be better than learning it from a book. It has got to be good geography, interesting, interesting choice of places, nice pictures.</p>
<b>Paul</b>	<p>What do we know already? What is new? What analogies? What exemplars to use? Under very clear guidance, the textbook being an endorsed one. Key ideas and content, tick all of that or they will send it back. Distil out what needed to go in and what had to be left behind. Could have done with a bit more here, well yes, but it's got to make commercial sense.</p>
<b>Ron</b>	<p>You know the range of students that might be using this book. It has got to be accessible. If you have visited somewhere that it is so much easier to have a better understanding of it. And therefore, hopefully explain it and bring it to life to somebody else. You can't visit everywhere. There are some places that I do not know much about. I'd like to visit places that I would not necessarily be teaching about.</p>

## Written narratives describing the key theme 'know-why'

<b>Linda</b>	<p>The skills of a good writer are probably the same skills needed by a geographer.</p> <p>To represent the contemporary rather than an out-of-date view of the world.</p> <p>Literature was useful for pitch, ensuring theory and text is written in an accessible way.</p> <p>The spec was the last to be accredited, so my chapter was written, not printed.</p> <p>This gave me time to proof read and write the Teacher Book.</p>
<b>Olly</b>	<p>I went back to the original requirements, understanding what the specification is after.</p> <p>AQA, Edexcel, Eduqas and OCR all interpret things slightly differently.</p> <p>Back to the sample assessment material, the mark scheme criteria is a moving target.</p> <p>You have to second guess, making judgement calls all the time.</p> <p>Explaining in student-friendly language, with an aspirational level of content.</p>
<b>Rebus</b>	<p>It is important to know your place, your local area.</p> <p>Students get to go beyond that, to know their place in a different context.</p> <p>It is also about pushing their boundaries, going outside their lived experience.</p> <p>Thinking about places elsewhere, the depth and the detail.</p> <p>To compare, contrast, see similarities and differences.</p>
<b>Jem</b>	<p>A good geographer ensures that case studies are representative and contemporary.</p> <p>Opening students' eyes to similarities, differences, connections, and awe and wonder.</p> <p>A balance of local and familiar and expanding horizons, gives students a global education.</p> <p>Ideas of hegemony, cultural identity, globalisation and inequality are important.</p> <p>Investigating and thinking geographically about people, places and processes.</p>
<b>Ash</b>	<p>Geography education should matter.</p> <p>Where teachers are trusted as practitioners</p> <p>To equip students with powerful knowledge for them as learners.</p> <p>A good world map for people who are not taking geography forward.</p> <p>And important place knowledge for those that are progressing to higher education.</p>
<b>Vic</b>	<p>Textbook writers have got responsibilities.</p> <p>To bring something alive in the students' minds with real examples.</p> <p>It has to be useful for what they want, what I would call accessibility,</p> <p>To convey that idea to students, getting them to understand about real people's lives.</p> <p>I usually end up talking a lot about power and where power lies.</p>
<b>Sam</b>	<p>So much curriculum change. Teachers are using textbooks more than usual.</p> <p>The only place where there is all the information that students and teachers need.</p> <p>Where approval guarantees that the Awarding Body is happy with subject content.</p> <p>Write in a way that people can understand, make it up-to-date and interesting.</p> <p>It has got to be worth the page in the textbook you have given it.</p>
<b>Paul</b>	<p>Let me say at the outset, I am totally against endorsed textbooks, but there is no choice.</p> <p>When I went through school I can remember only a couple of textbooks. I'm pre-Waugh.</p> <p>I would not want any textbook when you are just starting on page one and through you go.</p> <p>As an examiner it rejoices our heart to hear something that has not come from a textbook.</p> <p>Get an inspired teacher and a good group and the education goes way beyond the geography.</p>
<b>Ron</b>	<p>I had one sample question to go on and I am thinking this is not really in the specification.</p> <p>When you are thinking about producing enough information, you know you cannot provide it.</p> <p>Perhaps it comes out a bit simplistically. Don't depend on the textbook.</p> <p>You have to depend on the more able students doing more and the teachers doing more.</p> <p>The textbook has been written within certain parameters, and it is not going to deliver A*s.</p>

## Appendix E Codes and themes and visual representation summary

Overarching themes	Sub-themes and Micro-themes
Know-what (knowledge)	<p><b>Knowledge and understanding of subject content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ subject content</li> <li>• Specification order/ golden thread</li> <li>• Creativity and logicity like a jigsaw</li> <li>• The nature and structure of knowledge</li> <li>• On the accessibility-complexity continuum</li> <li>• Inclusivity - multiple voices, identities and lenses</li> <li>• Data types and triangulation</li> <li>• Paradigm tension- human/ physical geography</li> <li>• Break down binaries/ stereotypes</li> </ul> <p><b>Sourcing knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel</li> <li>• Lived experience</li> <li>• Teaching experience</li> <li>• Disciplinary knowledge</li> <li>• Previous textbooks</li> <li>• Institutions i.e. World Bank IMF GIS</li> <li>• Internet/Open access information</li> <li>• News/current affairs</li> <li>• Books, films, radio, music</li> <li>• Use of teacher written resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Valuing geographical perspectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical/contemporary</li> <li>Place as process, it moves on</li> <li>Punctuation points/ history of place reverberates through time/ Redundancy with change</li> <li>• Social construction (Paradigms, standpoint and stance)</li> <li>Experienced place</li> <li>We socially construct place</li> <li>The way people identify with place</li> <li>Multiple, contested meanings i.e. spiritual</li> <li>In the geographical imagination</li> </ul>
Know-how (skill)	<p><b>Recognising professional expertise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A deep subject knowledge</li> <li>• A good researcher</li> <li>• Implicitly critical with data</li> <li>• With finger on the pulse</li> <li>• Confidence in own professional judgement</li> <li>• Good classroom operative</li> <li>• Reflective practitioner</li> <li>• Ability to make multiple decisions quickly</li> <li>• Adaptable to moving goals</li> <li>• A flair for writing</li> <li>• Love of subject</li> <li>• An aware of own perspective</li> <li>• An awareness of student misconceptions</li> <li>• Authors need to know their audience</li> </ul> <p><b>The rules of writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishers guidance</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• ALCAB advice</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Space</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words</li> <li>• Images</li> <li>• Fixed content</li> <li>• Specification order</li> <li>• Multiple authors</li> </ul> <p><b>Adding value - geography matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structuring writing within a conceptual frame</li> <li>• Writing with a sense of unity across subject content</li> <li>• Prioritising key content</li> <li>• Good use of contemporary case studies</li> <li>• Negotiating concepts and subject content</li> <li>• Writing well-crafted activities</li> <li>• Engaging curiosity to ‘hook’ students</li> <li>• Content relevant to students</li> <li>• Bring something alive in mind</li> </ul>
Know-who (knowers)	<p><b>Influential/knowledgeable others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic papers/books</li> <li>• Academics</li> <li>• Ethnographic researchers</li> <li>• Contemporaries</li> <li>• Professionals in the field</li> <li>• Real people</li> </ul> <p><b>Developing expertise with others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own university education</li> <li>• Own teaching experience</li> <li>• Own research with students and teachers</li> </ul> <p><b>Communities of practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own geography department</li> <li>• Learned societies – RGS-IBG</li> <li>• Subject association – Geographical Association</li> </ul>
Know-where (places)	<p><b>Distribution of places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale of place – local/regional</li> <li>• Global/national distribution of places</li> <li>• Limit Euro/southern-centric assumptions</li> <li>• Exceptional events and representative places (magnitude)</li> <li>• Select places to teach themes/concepts</li> <li>• Select places with ample resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Choosing places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar places/attachments to place</li> <li>• ‘Know’ your own place</li> <li>• ‘Know your students’ place</li> <li>• Use and access to the local place</li> <li>• Likeable places &amp; personal preferences</li> <li>• Student voice in own education</li> <li>• Over-studied ‘classic’ places</li> </ul> <p><b>Diverse and changing places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to unpick place</li> <li>• Differences within and between places</li> <li>• Power relations within/between places</li> <li>• Exceptional places</li> <li>• Awe and wonder</li> </ul>
Know-why (purpose)	<p><b>Bringing assessment, geography and teaching knowledge together in a resource</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think like a researcher</li> <li>• Think like a student</li> <li>• Think like an examiner</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think like a teacher</li> <li>• Think like an editor/ publisher</li> </ul> <p><b>The purpose of a geographical education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden horizons - airing ought to know about places</li> <li>• Providing a good geographical education for all</li> <li>• The wider purpose of education informing writing</li> <li>• Using language that matters</li> </ul> <p><b>The purpose of an A level textbook</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate approach to textbook</li> <li>• Aspirational level of subject content</li> <li>• Providing teachers with confidence</li> </ul>
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A summary of the visual representations

<b>Author</b>	<b>Drawn and named features and written comments</b>
Linda	<p>A bird's eye view of the village with the main roads, recreation ground, hall, bus stops, church and all the buildings drawn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New housing</li> <li>• Primary school, Village hall, Scout hut</li> <li>• Park land, tennis courts, the Rec/ swings</li> <li>• Shop, the old shop (shut), pub (shut)</li> <li>• Holiday home</li> <li>• Woodland and footpaths, historic well, allotments</li> </ul> <p>Tourists 'people who rent the holiday homes think the village is so quaint, so English', Families: 'the school is easy to walk to and for older children there is a free bus service', Parents: 'small class sizes are great and a great sense of community', Commuters: 'The best of both worlds, 15 minutes from a commuter station and I live in a pretty (and quiet) village which retains facilities like a school, shop, cubs and scouts, tennis courts, fireworks night.</p>
Olly	<p>A bird's eye view of the town with the market square, main roads and church drawn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendly market town, Saturday market, Independent shops</li> <li>• Local Church, historic battle site, oldest building</li> <li>• Nice bread shop, cheese stalls, good fish 'n chips</li> </ul> <p>'sense of continuity', 'always feel at home in the middle of the town'  'Thriving with new shops, bars and cafes'</p>
Rebus	<p>The church and affordable homes are drawn, surrounded by greenery, with two figures drawn expressing their sense of place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable, affordable housing, Local issue as houses built on greenfield, Effective consultation and final decision made taking on board local concerns.</li> <li>• Sense of history and community.</li> <li>• Shared experiences e.g. beer festival and pig roast.</li> </ul> <p>'I feel safe in the village– I know people in the school and the village'  'My family and I have farmed in the village for years'</p>

Jem	<p>A bird's eye view of the area with homes, car parking, the main roads and local park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shops and food outlets</li> <li>• Wide pavements, people hanging about</li> <li>• Runners and cyclists</li> </ul> <p>'This is a place with a mix of people enjoying the outdoors' 'A place for families to hang out'</p>
Ash	<p>A bird's eye view of the area with homes, shops, transport links shown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waitrose (happy place)</li> <li>• Station (busy) and crossing space (safe)</li> <li>• Terraced homes</li> </ul> <p>'A place with pleased rich owners and stressed and over-worked young renters including worried eastern Europeans'</p>
Sam	<p>A bird's eye view of the area with homes, shops, transport links and connections to nearby places shown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honeypot, Small village – always crowded!</li> <li>• Expensive boutique hotel – rooms and private cinema/jazz concerts</li> <li>• Shops 'high end', Utilities, but no bank, butcher etc.</li> <li>• New car park on land sold</li> <li>• Church</li> </ul> <p>'visitors have a new car park but it is hard to park any day of the year' 'residents are priced out from this village'</p>
Paul	<p>An oblique view of the village with the local cinema, shops, market and public space shown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shops, Indoor market, Hairdressers, Pubs, Cafes</li> <li>• Main road and Traffic</li> <li>• Skateboarding in the public space</li> <li>• Benches, War memorial</li> <li>• Cinema</li> </ul>
Ron	<p>An urban model of a city with the key areas labelled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBD, shopping centre</li> <li>• South-west suburbs, Affluent area</li> <li>• Well-qualified largely white population</li> <li>• National Park, Local valley, rivers</li> <li>• Local motorway</li> </ul> <p>'greenest, safest and best city', 'most deprived area in the NE', 'Forgemasters also sporting facilities which have replaced steel factories'</p>

## Appendix F Places named in Changing Places textbook chapters

Distribution of countries and UK regions represented in A level textbooks

Hodder AQA	Oxford AQA	CUP AQA	Hodder OCR	OUP Edexcel
<i>Place case studies – where over 100 words are dedicated to the place</i>				
Glastonbury Trafalgar Square Bournville, Birmingham Devonport, Plymouth Medellin, Colombia Belfast Torquay, South Devon Spitalfields and Brick Lane, London	Mount Snowdon 9/11 Memorial, New York, USA Milton, Dorset Poundbury, Dorset Plymouth Llandudno Great Missenden Detroit, USA	Los Angeles Seoul Detroit Lea Valley, London Stratford, London The Blasket Islands	Lympstone, East Devon Toxteth, Liverpool Kurdistan Silicon Valley Jakarta, Indonesia Irvine, California Birmingham, UK Newton Aycliffe, UK	Morley, Dewsbury, Sheffield, Yorkshire East London Sydney Pittsburgh Beattyville, Kentucky Grampound, Newquay and Plymouth, Cornwall Barking, Stratford, Dagenham, London Manchester Slough
<i>Examples where a place is briefly with less than 100 words dedicated to the place</i>				
Tahrir Square St Paul's, London Kilburn High Road, London Totnes, South Devon Cornwall New Zealand London Salford Quays Kelpies sculpture, Falkirk Weston-Super- Mare Skelmersdale, West Lancashire	Bologna Verona Aberdeen Abbotsbury, Dorset New Era Estate, Hackney Great Britain E20, London	Stratford Water Eaton Delhi Leicester New Zealand St Paul's, London New York Malham, Yorkshire Gower Peninsula Purbeck Trafford, Manchester Las Vegas Ellis Island, NY	London New York North Atlantic Ocean San Francisco Manchester, Brighton Uluru, Australia Jerusalem	Glasgow Eden Project Wave Hub, Cornwall Inner and Outer London North Yorkshire Highland, Scotland Southall Tower Hamlets Newham, London

## Appendix G Perceptions linked to educational resource quality

The key features of a high-quality educational resource (PA, 2015a) were set out against the views of the authors in this study.

Guidance	Detail or quotes
A high-quality geographical resource	
1.1 Has a clear author's voice and narrative that tells a 'geographical story', thus illustrating geographical thinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'I think it is really important to have this golden thread running through, I think teaching is kind of, in the same way writing a textbook, you have to have a kind of story that you weave through and as a teacher and as an author, if you cannot see where that thread is going, then it is really difficult to get that across to the students.'</i> (Rebus, line 28)</li> </ul>
2.6 Will provide a geographical narrative that illustrates writing at length, in depth and in language that facilitates and expands pupils' comprehension of geographical terminology and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'I try to construct real examples around it to sound as if life is really coming alive almost as if I have been there – it's a form of lying [laughing], in a sense, try as make it as real as you possibly can.'</i> (Vic, line 97)</li> <li>• <i>'I decided to do a thing on Syria and when I got the final copy, it turns out that [another author] has used a similar, but different map and that just looks bonkers if you are reading it from the outside. Why have you got two slightly different versions of the same story in two different chapters?'</i> (Ash, line 216)</li> </ul>
1.2 Is written with a disciplinary framework in mind – outlining aims and explaining to pupils how the book contributes to geographical knowledge by developing understanding of spatial patterns, places and environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'The most important skill is to be able to structure your writing well, it needs to hang within a framework, highlight conceptual understanding, while presenting new knowledge, case studies and examples in an informative and interesting way.'</i> (Jem, line 383)</li> <li>• <i>'The textbook is simply a skeletal framework, but to me, it's not good preparation for higher education that they go thinking this is my course because when they get to higher education, they will be required to read 12 things for one essay.'</i> (Paul, line 320)</li> <li>• <i>'Including new concepts for A level were a helpful addition in the DfE subject content. This provided quite a useful framework in which to view thematic content and give a focus to case studies.'</i> (Jem, line 78)</li> </ul>
1.3 Should aim to broaden pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding beyond minimum examination requirements. While textbooks should not be narrowly targeted on particular specifications as this may lead to a focus purely on passing the test.	
1.4 Materials may be online or in hard copy or a combination of the two. Both have their strengths and uses, offering different pedagogical opportunities.	
<i>The content of a high-quality geographical resource</i>	
2.1 Will normally include an introduction to the text, showing how the different chapters/sections fit together and outlining how the content develops understanding of the variation and interaction of physical and human phenomena across the surface of the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'You have to know how things work in terms of the order, it is like a jigsaw, except there isn't a jigsaw there, so you are creating the jigsaw so that is the creative bit, and everything has to slot in nicely and be logical.'</i> (Rebus, line 483)</li> <li>• <i>'One of the writers I worked with...his writing is a little bit like coming into an episode of something like 'In the line of fire' on BBC and you have missed the first seven or eight minutes, so you are trying to pick up what the story is as you are reading. So, the first thing that I had to do was to try to work out where he is going and what he was saying and think, how do I fill in those first seven minutes to try to make sense of this to the students and that I think in many ways is one of the most important jobs'</i> (Vic, line 35)</li> </ul>

Guidance	Detail or quotes
<p>2.2 Should provide a depth of knowledge – a text should be an authoritative account of the topic.</p> <p>2.3 Should provide a breadth of knowledge, although the scope will vary depending upon the nature and aims of the resource.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘The biggest constraint was space in the book...when you are thinking about producing enough information for them to write an in-depth answer about any aspect of that specification, you just know you are not going to provide it, you are only providing a fairly superficial account.’</i> (Ron, line 90)</li> <li>• <i>‘I did keep going to the sample assessment material having a look at the questions and having a look at the mark schemes, trying to make sure that the material would adequately cover those in both the breadth and depth they seem to be aiming for.’</i> (Olly, line 21)</li> <li>• <i>‘I think the more that students can unpick a place, the more they can see the depth and the detail there as well as between places, I think that is really important.’</i> (Rebus, line 268)</li> </ul>
<p>2.4 Is organised for progression – topics, knowledge and skills should be organised into a logical and pedagogically coherent order.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘With a specification, it’s very much, it dictates the order...yeah, I think that order is a problem, or not a problem, a constraint’</i> (Rebus, line 20 &amp; 32)</li> <li>• <i>‘In terms of those key headings which you would get from in the spec content, what do they call them? The key ideas and content, if we didn’t tick all of that, [the publisher] were going to send it back to us and say we have been through it, you need to do this in terms of that broad structure.’</i> (Paul, line 7)</li> <li>• <i>‘Once I had got my head around what the spec was about, and how it might divide up, I then thought about the places that I would want to choose to illustrate those ideas.’</i> (Ron, line 8)</li> </ul>
<p>2.5 Should align with the appropriate national guidelines (National Curriculum, GCSE Subject Content and AS/A level Subject Content), but not be limited to examination requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘The students and the publishers usually just want the nitty gritty for the case study, they have only got a few hundred words to play with and any extra bits tend to get stripped out.’</i> (Rebus, line 125)</li> <li>• <i>‘I thought I could cut out about half a page of writing, here and not lose anything from the spec, but in the end, I thought that this is important for students to be aware of things from another perspective.’</i> (Olly, line 215)</li> <li>• <i>‘I would also like a world where textbooks can go beyond the specification in terms of depth and breadth of content or even textbooks which are written to ‘go beyond’ key content.’</i> (Jem, line 438)</li> <li>• <i>‘I feel that some of the language used in the ALCAB, and it could have just been made much more helpful to us, because I think it only talks about social inequality on ALCAB and you cannot separate that out from economic or political inequality... I am delighted that we had ALCAB, I wish ALCAB had continued meeting or there should be something.’</i> (Paul, line 26)</li> </ul>
<p>2.7 Accurate and comprehensive data should be used to illustrate geographical patterns, trends and change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘The best way to fairly represent place is if we use a wide range of maps, sources of quantitative data – census data and other formal datasets as well as qualitative data such as first-hand experiences of place. This range of data must also be up-to-date so that textbooks represent the contemporary situation rather than an out-of-date view of the world.’</i> (Linda, line 228)</li> <li>• <i>‘You look at the sources and you think I am not sure I trust that particular source. I am going to need something, which almost comes from two directions, to get triangulation.’</i> (Olly, line 15)</li> <li>• <i>‘If you are teacher in a classroom using a textbook, that is the point, that’s the time to have a conversation with students about data, about the quality of data and the quality of textbooks and the quality of case studies.’</i> (Rebus, line 128)</li> <li>• <i>‘Ensure that you use multiple sources from which you collect information, to triangulate your research.’</i> (Jem, line 287)</li> </ul>

Guidance	Detail or quotes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'You need to know about the 2011 Japanese tsunami, if you look at hazard data, it sends the 2011 financial costs off the scale.'</i> (Ash, line 155)</li> <li>• <i>'For the macro-global stuff, it is the World Bank, IMF and I would not feel the need to double check those data.'</i> (Ash, line 358)</li> <li>• <i>'I used to use the Census data, but nowadays you have also got the websites that give you scores for liveability and quality of life down to the individual postcodes and so we would be probably looking at that data alongside images, alongside the way in which places are being talked about in the media.'</i> (Sam, line 327)</li> </ul>
<p>2.8. Will often raise significant ethical and political issues (like population growth and energy consumption), while avoiding bias. Issues should be approached from a geographer's perspective and presented as open to discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'Bias in the news is shocking at times. I use to think that the BBC was a trustworthy source, but over the last decade, I have come to use other media outlets such as Al Jazeera. Politics, media and business seem to be so wrapped up together.'</i> (Jem, line 269)</li> <li>• <i>'Usually, I have to turn it down, but I usually end up talking a lot about power and where power lies. I think in many ways the Narmada River Scheme in India is what we ought to be looking at now, rather than the Three Gorges Dam.'</i> (Vic, line 308)</li> <li>• <i>'There is bias everywhere. We are all by nature subjective. So, you have to be careful about news stories.'</i> (Linda, line 249)</li> </ul>
<p>2.9 Real life case studies/location examples will add context and deeper meaning to theoretical content.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'So, if there is only one tap for ten families, that means more to me in my mind and is probably giving more to the student in their mind if I paint this picture of a place, then students can imagine it.'</i> (Vic, line 86)</li> <li>• <i>'The reports in the Financial Times and the Economist have these lovely clear examples of a pigment in a paint that could only be made in a factory in Japan that got washed away by the tsunami and that disrupted everything and I thought that was a lovely crystal clear visualisation.'</i> (Ash, line 158)</li> </ul>
<p>2.10 Resources produced in hard copy will often include direction to websites where it is possible to study topics/ issues/ places in greater depth or to explore more recent examples.</p>	

## Appendix H Public Outputs

### Books and Journals

Ross, S., Griffiths, A., Collins, L., Bayliss, T., Hurst, C., Digby, B. and Slater, A. (2018) 'Abu Dhabi Case Study' in *International A Level Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2017) 'Post 16 Geography' in M. Smith (ed.) *Secondary Geography Handbook*. Sheffield: Geographical Association.

Wood, P. and Rawlings Smith, E. (2017) 'Lesson study: a collaborative approach to teacher growth', *Geography*, 102 (2), pp.91-94.

Rawlings Smith, E., Simon Oakes and Alistair Owens (2016) *Changing Place: Changing Places*. Top Spec Series. Sheffield: Geographical Association.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2015) 'How can we better represent the Middle East?', *Teaching Geography*, 40(1), pp.72-75.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2013) 'My Place Abu Dhabi', *Teaching Geography*, 38(1), pp.35-37.

### Papers

Rawlings Smith, E. (2019) 'The professional capital of authors who recontextualise knowledge about place in A level geography textbooks', paper presented at the School of Education, University of Leicester lunchtime lecture series, 6 June.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2018) 'An exploration of the expertise and experiences of A level geography textbook authors', paper presented at the *Doctoral Research Conference*, University of Birmingham, 24 November.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2018) 'The experiences and conceptions of authors as they define, curricularise and legitimise knowledge about place in endorsed A level geography textbooks', paper presented at the *RGS-IBG International Conference*, Cardiff University, 30 August.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2018) 'How authors select and represent place in endorsed 'A' level geography textbooks', paper presented at the *School of Education Research and Scholarship Conference*, University of Leicester, 16 July.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2017) 'An interpretative phenomenological analysis: how A level geography students and educators conceive and make sense of place', paper presented at the *Geography Association Annual Conference*, The University of Manchester, 20-22 April.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2017) 'How do A level geography students conceive and make sense of place and what role do teachers and textbook authors have in this process?', paper presented at the *Geography Teacher Educators Conference*, University of Plymouth, 27 January.

Rawlings Smith, E. (2016) 'Exploring and Expanding the Understanding of Place', paper presented at the *Geography Teacher Educator's Conference*, University of Manchester, 24 January.

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