

**ON LOCATION/S:  
Seeking fieldwork sites for the study of society and  
environment within teacher education—an analysis of  
social constructs of place and space**

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## **Declaration**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **On Location/s: Seeking fieldwork sites for the study of society and environment within teacher education— an analysis of social constructs of place and space**

As an ethnographic study situated within teacher education practice, this thesis is structured around “three pedagogical moments” in the studies of society and environment units within a Bachelor of Education degree. This study links classroom teaching and observation illuminated through naturalistic enquiry with student surveys and interviews and locational analysis using a multi-method approach to research. The hidden and explicit curriculum and pedagogies of fieldwork are investigated as these are implemented in early childhood and primary education—and more particularly, in the teaching of Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), as a specific site of knowledge construction in teacher education. Accordingly, the study is located within recent debates surrounding the nature of geographic knowledge and understandings of place and space as partial and socially constructed. It also draws on recent critiques of fieldwork in early childhood and primary education and more specifically, in geography. Integral to this discussion are understandings of place and space as triggers to childhood learning and emerging identity. Reference to paintings by Jeffrey Smart—as an illustrative and visual device—helps to locate the study’s central themes, and the visual and emotional as well as rational and cultural dimensions of student teacher choices.

Key themes identified through a constructivist approach to grounded theory are used as the basis of analysis of interview responses and the generation of theory. By beginning a critical pedagogy of space with the “mattering maps” and “cartographies of taste” of teacher education students, the study articulates the many discourses brought to the selection of sites for Studies of Society and Environment and contributes to the dialogic process of learning to teach.

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