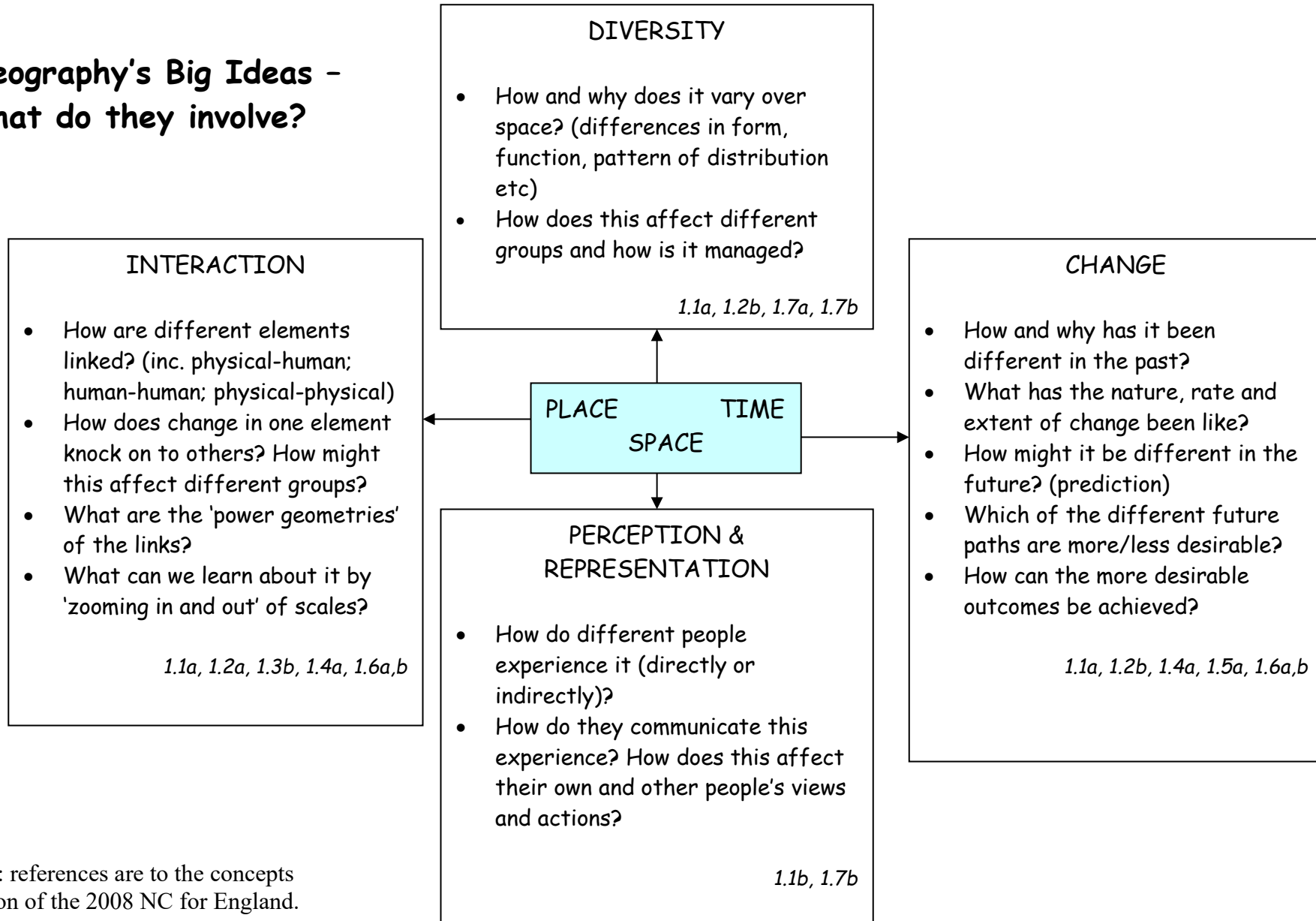
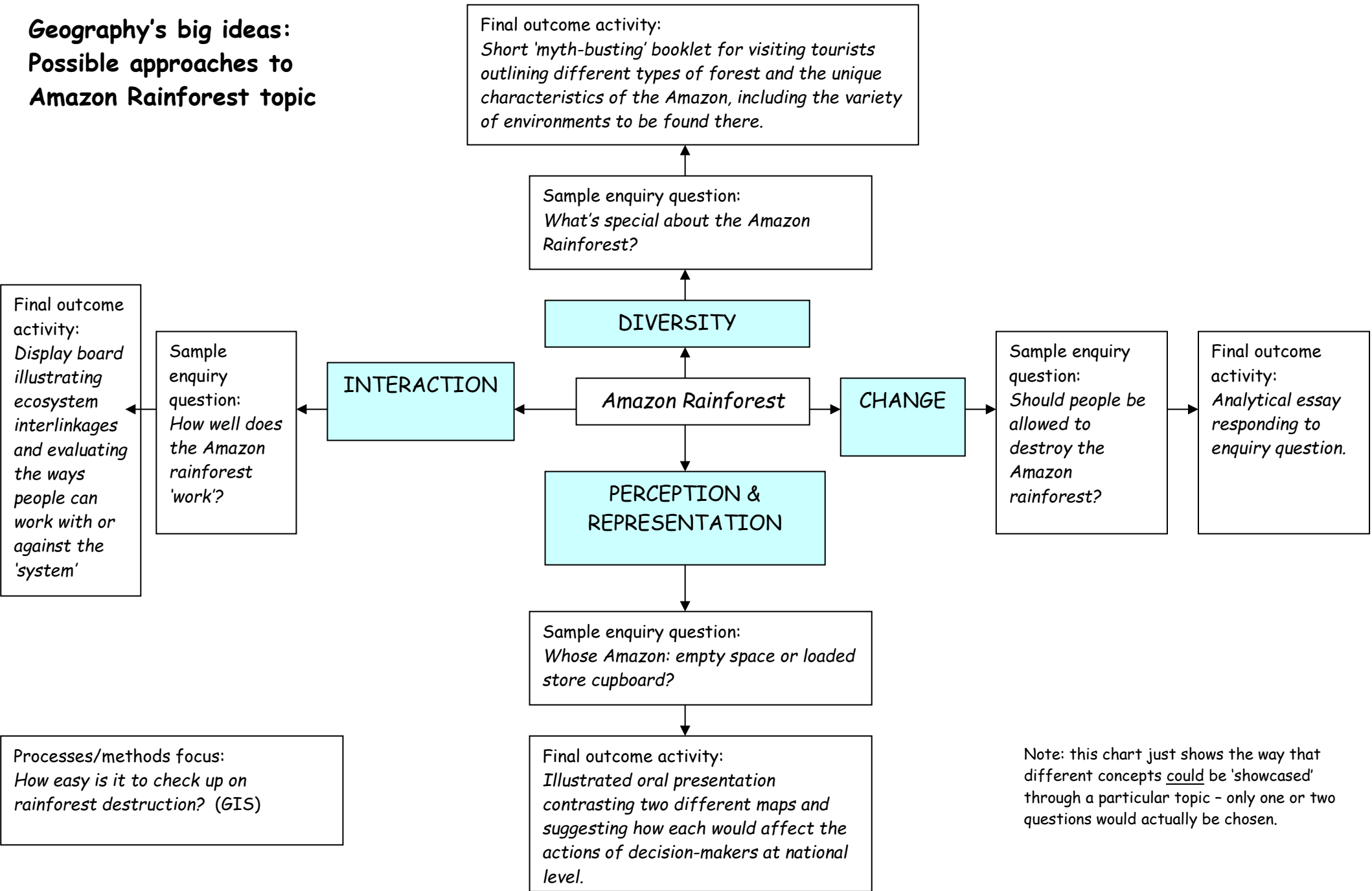


Geography's Big Ideas - what do they involve?



Note: references are to the concepts section of the 2008 NC for England.

**Geography's big ideas:
Possible approaches to
Amazon Rainforest topic**



Some ideas for enquiry questions - Amazon Rainforest

Each question is designed to 'showcase' a certain big concept. This isn't to say that activities in that enquiry sequence won't develop thinking around other concepts too; it is just a matter of focus. Which concept in particular will drive your planning and shape the children's learning? Which one will help you choose which activities to include and which to leave out this time? I've found that foregrounding one concept in this way really sharpens up my thinking, giving more focus and direction to the sequence. Ideally, enquiry questions should have both 'pith and rigour' (i.e. be both well-phrased engaging questions that children want to answer and carefully designed to draw out high quality geographical learning). See Re-presenting Geography section 2.1 for more details about this. Formulating really good enquiry questions is not easy to do - try starting from rigour (geography teachers are already good at this), then moving to pith! This isn't to say that all questions should be teacher-formulated at all, but these ideas apply to those that are.

DIVERSITY

- What's special about the Amazon rainforest?
- Amazon Rainforest: an 'unbroken green carpet'?
- Tribal life: the past or the future?
- What can be learned from the Yanomami? (cultural understanding focus)
- How could you live in the Amazon Rainforest?
- Why do so many species live in the Amazon? (a bit lacking in pith, this one - can you make it better?)

CHANGE

- Should people be allowed to destroy the Amazon rainforest? (see Re-presenting Geography section 2.2)
- Will the Amazon Rainforest still be there in 2010?
- How did the car change the Amazon? (focus on the rubber boom)
- What should happen to the Amazon?
- Trees or Televisions? (see Re-presenting Geography section 2.3)

INTERACTION

- How well does the Amazon 'work'?
- Who should decide the Amazon's future?
- Can the Amazon's resources be used sustainably? (bit lacking in pith, this one - can you make it better?)
- Would nature reserves work in the Amazon? (scale focus)
- Should we buy chewing gum/hardwood furniture/Brazilian beef....?
- Why is the Amazon rainforest there?

PERCEPTION & REPRESENTATION

- Whose Amazon: empty space or loaded store cupboard?
- Who does the Amazon belong to?
- Amazon Rainforest: 'an impenetrable green hell'?

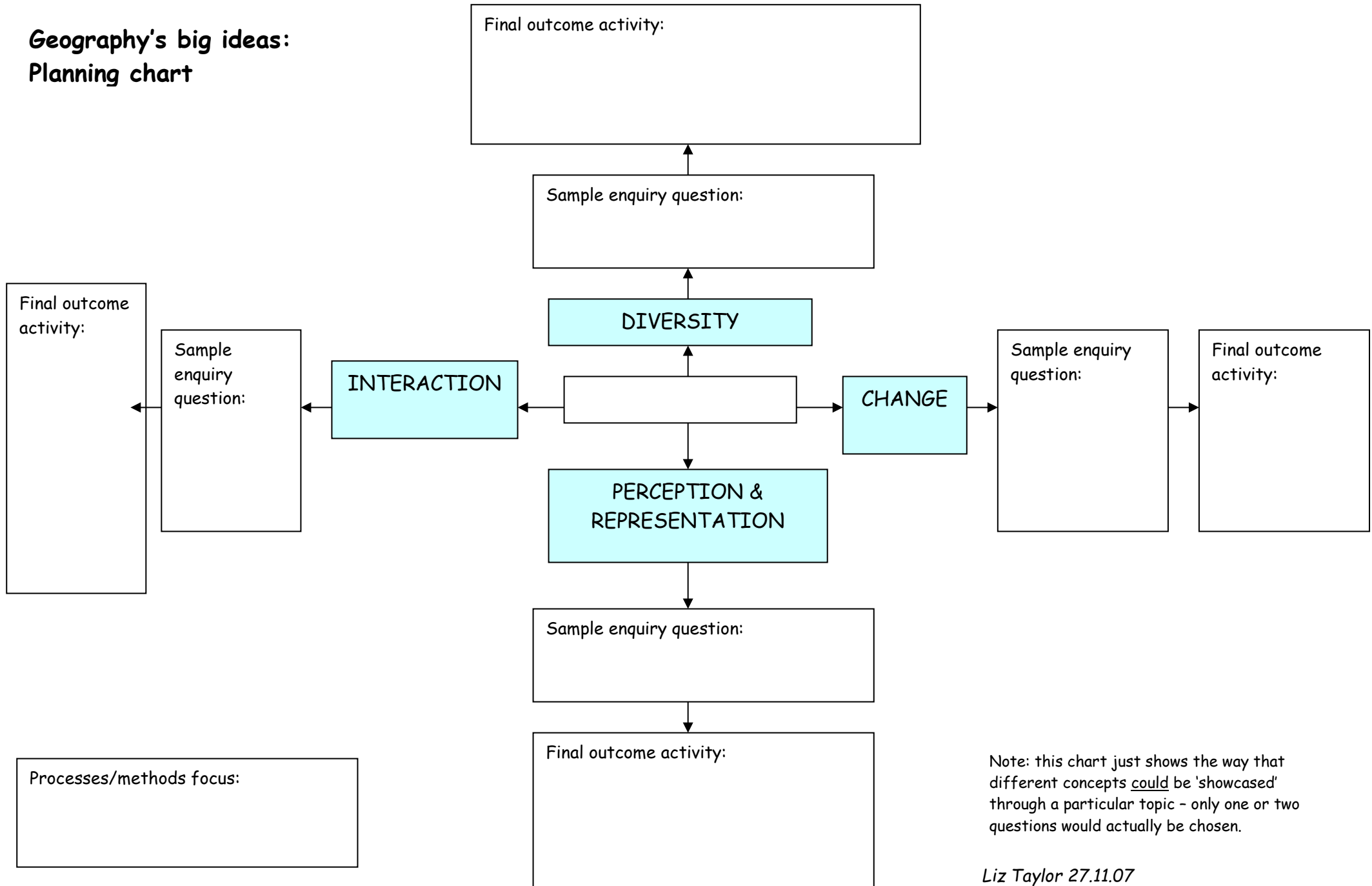
PROCESSES/METHODS

- How easy is it to check up on rainforest destruction? (GIS focus)

Acknowledgements:

This work was developed for Suffolk Advisory Service's Heads of Geography Conference, November 2007, and also used with Somerset LEA's Heads of Geography Conference in that month. It draws on ideas from Re-presenting Geography (Taylor 2004) which could not have been developed without the inspiration of Christine Counsell, and Michael Riley's excellent article (2000) 'Into the Key Stage 3 history garden: choosing and planting your enquiry questions', Teaching History, 99, pp. 8-13.

**Geography's big ideas:
Planning chart**



Note: this chart just shows the way that different concepts could be 'showcased' through a particular topic - only one or two questions would actually be chosen.

Liz Taylor 27.11.07