



Preparation for the Geography Independent Investigation

A number of Independent Investigation fieldwork models are possible:

Model 1: a Barcelona visit is used to complete the full fieldwork requirements for the A Level Individual Investigation with students returning to their chosen field study area, or a comparative location for a second day to collect their own data;

Model 2: a Barcelona visit is used to complete the fieldwork requirements for the A Level Individual Investigation with students collecting their own data on a single day in their chosen location;

Model 3: students use their Barcelona fieldwork to compare with a location in their home area;

Model 4: fieldwork 'tasters' are provided in different syllabus theme locations to give students possible ideas and skills for their own individual investigations. Project proposal forms may be developed during their visit.

For **Models 1 and 2**, we strongly advise that all full A-level students complete the appropriate component of the course prior to developing an enquiry question and carrying out their fieldwork. That way, there will be more ideas to draw on and more opportunities for the entire class to each develop a truly individual focus.

To get the best results from their stay with us, all A-level students should familiarise themselves with our 'pre-arrival' literature at least three weeks before departure to Barcelona. Two weeks prior to departure they should have drafted an enquiry question. One week prior to departure they should have a research plan in place. Students who do not arrive with an enquiry question will still be able to find a focus and carry out research; however, it is less likely to produce a quality outcome if they have not put in appropriate individual preparation beforehand.

Advantages and disadvantages of the different models

Model 1 is most likely to produce the best student outcomes, but limits the number of different field studies undertaken. A comparative location on a second day may overload students.

Model 2 is more difficult to produce the best student outcomes. Students need to be thoroughly prepared in advance and arrive having developed their own questions and research methodologies. Students may select from our range of worksheets, for example, but these should be evaluated and refined. This may appeal to those schools that have visited us before, and have good experience to draw upon. It could allow groups to shorten a stay, or undertake a wider range of field studies.

Model 3 provides the opportunity for a wider range of field studies to be undertaken. This may appeal to those students who enjoy the challenge of independent follow-up work.

Model 4, the 'taster' model, makes the most of our range of inspirational field study locations, helps to consolidate an understanding of syllabus themes and enables an exploration of more key concepts (see table below).

4 Core Concepts	Place	Space	Scale	Environment	
14 Specialised AS/A level Concepts	Adaptation and Mitigation	Causality	Equilibrium	Feedback	Globalisation
	Identity	Inequality	Interdependence	Representation	Resilience
	Risk	Sustainability	Systems	Thresholds	

Key concepts in geographical understanding

Bringing a mixed group of AS and A-level students

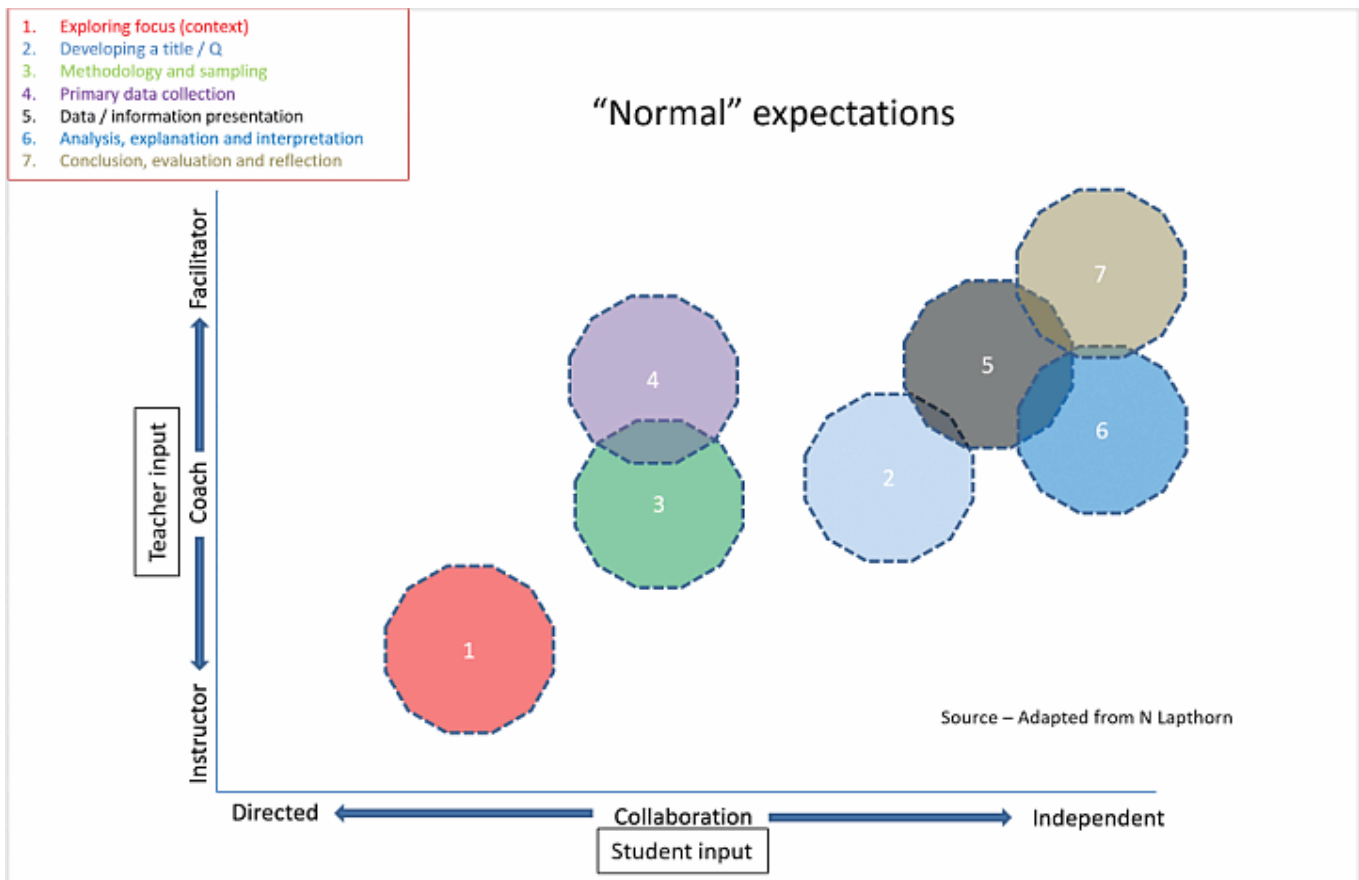
Teachers bringing a mixed group of AS and A-level students should bear in mind that the AS-level students do not need to spend more than 2 days on their fieldwork enquiry. During the days when the A-level students carry out their own individual research, AS students will need to be fully occupied. If this applies to your group, please bear this in mind and consider a separate AS itinerary as an option for the additional days.

How 'individual' does each student's work need to be?

The UK Department for Education requirements for the independent investigation are that it must:

- be based on a question or issue defined and developed by the student individually to address aims, questions and/or hypotheses relating to any of the compulsory or optional content;
- incorporate field data and/or evidence from field investigations, collected individually or in groups;
- draw on the student's own research, including their own field data and, if relevant, secondary data sourced by the student;
- require the student independently to contextualise, analyse and summarise findings and data;
- involve the individual drawing of conclusions and their communication by means of extended writing and the presentation of relevant data.

Every topic must be defined and developed by the student individually, with the teacher 'as coach' and some collaboration with other students may be expected. Analysis must be carried out independently. Students may collaborate over methodology, sampling and data collection with the teacher in a 'coaching' role. These guidelines are illustrated in the framework below, which shows the relationship between different levels of teacher and student input at various stages in the independent investigation.



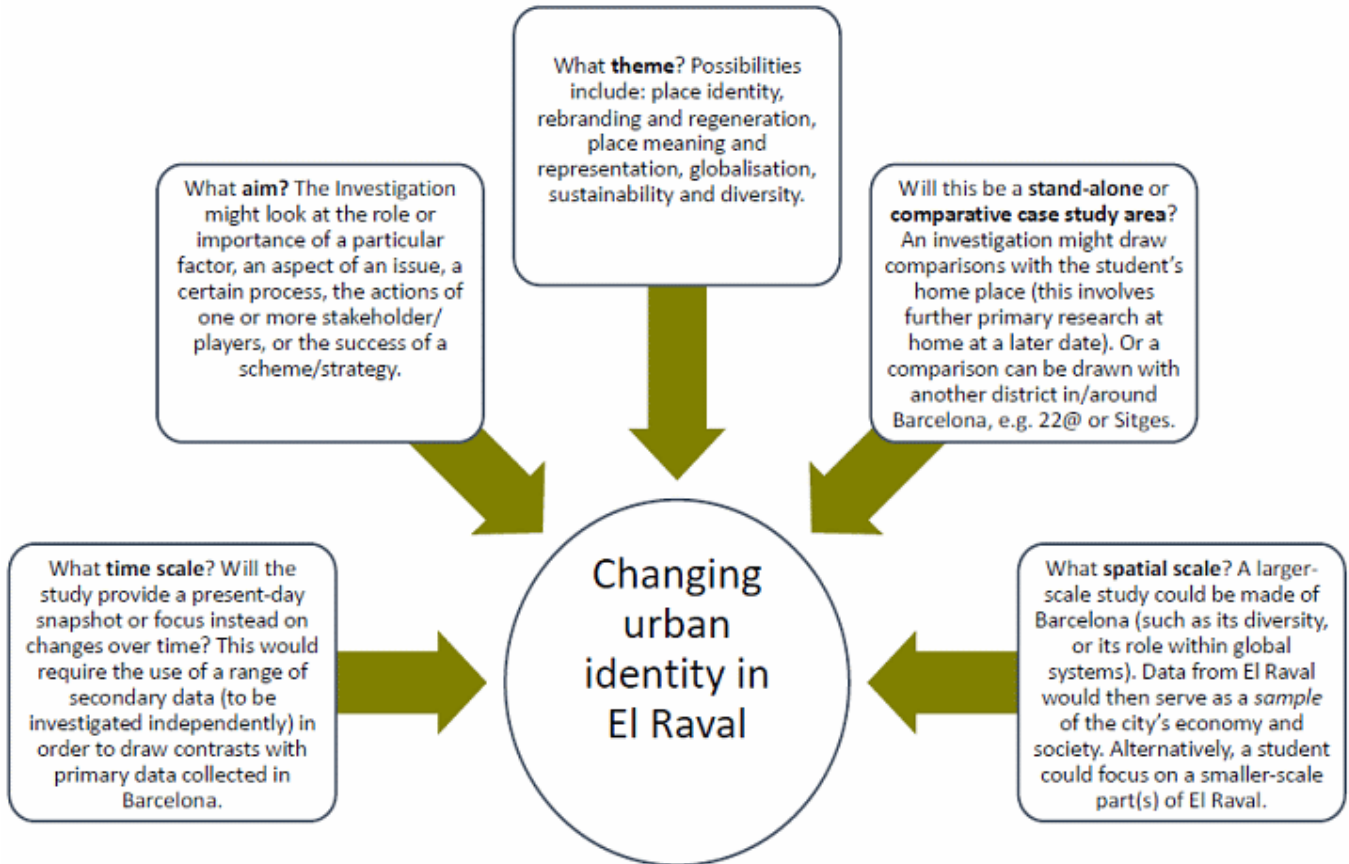
Relationship between different levels of teacher and student input at various stages in the independent investigation

Source: Edexcel Fieldwork Guide

How can each student find a different focus?

Our open exploratory approach to investigating changing urban identity in The Raval can be a 'springboard' for the investigation of numerous themes and issues, including place identity, rebranding and regeneration, place meaning and representation, globalisation, sustainability and diversity. Each focus in turn offers many possible topics – some will appeal to the most capable students with a high capacity for independent follow-up work (e.g. in their home town as a comparison); others will suit students who will want to complete their primary work in situ in Barcelona.

This open exploratory approach is illustrated in the diagram below.



Exploratory approach to investigating changing urban identity in The Raval