

EPISODE 11 – VARIATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE ECU

This worksheet provides questions and activities for students to engage in small groups. An instructor can then host a debriefing to share and further expand the answers.

1. What kinds of mistakes, in the ethical and effective presentation of social scientific findings, might occur if authors write in a free-form manner or stray from the structure of the ECU?

2. Has the ECU, as a template for reporting social scientific findings, made an impression upon you of being overly structured or formulaic? Why or why not?

3. Episode 11 displays how ECUs can be organized into different kinds of arguments. The options include chronological events, a typology, dimensions or facets of a complex situation, or poles of a spectrum. Select one of these. Then, drawing from topics and concerns in your discipline, invent a theme and a series of analytic points that convey your chosen argument.

4. There is a lot of social scientific writing that mismanages the multiple voices of the research project. Discuss what specific problems occur in a section of any paper that:

- Does not state a theme
- Forgoes an analytic point
- Omits orienting information
- Has no excerpts
- Skips analytic commentary

5. The ECU identifies and organizes different voices in a research project, namely, the author as inventor (AP); the author as field researcher (OI); the informants and their social world (E); and the author as diplomatic ambassador of the field site and literature (AC). Drawing from popular culture (e.g. politics, entertainment, history) identify famous individuals whose personalities align with the different roles. (E.g. Emeril Lagasse and the analytic point.) This is a playful exercise!

