

ASSIGNMENT # 6

Astro 597 – Winter 2020 Writing Workshop

1: TRACKING PROGRESS

Please continue to note how many words you wrote on each of 4 different days. Write me a short sentence or two about how it's been going, what's been working for you, what changes in your writing process you're experimenting with? etc — basically anything where a bit of feedback, self-reflection, and/or accountability could be useful.

2: PLEASE READ THE ATTACHED EXCERPTS FROM “THE SCIENTIST’S GUIDE TO WRITING” BY STEPHEN HEARD.

More brief, helpful chapters....

3: USING “TOPIC SENTENCES” TO PLAN A SECTION

In class, we discussed how all paragraphs should have a single purpose, which can frequently be described with a topic sentence. Then, in last week's assignment, you analyzed the topics of a series paragraphs from an existing paper.

This week, I would like you to draft out a paragraph-by-paragraph plan for a (not-yet-written) section of your paper.

First, draft out a list of possible topic sentences. In this initial step, aim for completeness, but do not focus too closely on structure.

Next, evaluate whether some of those topics are too complex/large for a single paragraph. If so, break the topic down into multiple paragraphs (e.g., “Describe sources of data” would become “Describe source of imaging data” + “Describe source of spectral data” + “Describe rejection of bad sources”).

Finally, evaluate the overall flow and structure. Are you leading from “familiar & straightforward” to “new & complex/subtle”? Will the reader have the information needed to understand a paragraph on X by the time that paragraph is reached? Is a complex argument rushed, or are you carefully leading the reader up to your big conclusion?

There are different tools you may want to consider for this exercise, depending on the complexity of your section. A simple ascii file that you can easily rearrange may be very effective. Index cards are

also a good option. For those of you who feel more confident when giving talks than you do when writing, drafting a series of power point slides (which you can easily rearrange and add figures to), may be a good solution.

4: WRITE AT LEAST ONE MORE PARAGRAPH FOR THE MAIN BODY OF YOUR PAPER

Again, your choice.

5: REVISE THE PARAGRAPHS FROM LAST WEEK AND THIS WEEK.