

**As you know, I don't think of myself as a particularly goal-driven person. I feel like I move through the world like a hiker. I'm constantly looking down to make sure that I don't trip (oh, and say, break a wrist) while on the trail. I make sure that I take time out to survey the landscape while I'm moving. And, like an experienced hiker once advised me, I continually look ahead to see where I'm going and look behind me to see how far I've come.**

**This semester one path I hiked was the literature review. At times I even kept my head down (or in the books) so much that I forgot to look around me. When I did look around I saw related information in all of my classes and just about everywhere I looked. When I looked forward, I saw my dissertation proposal and my research. When I looked behind me, I saw my passion for my focus. I'm not sure if my focus for my research actually developed during the seminar, but I know my understanding of it increased. I think that my topic was well developed when I first came to the seminar because I knew that the literature review was coming and that I needed to have a clue pretty early. As a part of my advanced planning for the course I think I talked to anyone who would listen to me about the idea of distributed emotion. These talks garnered a wide variety of responses and added information, and my enthusiasm increased as a result of them.**

**Another path that I hiked this semester was that of collegiality. At first I found myself looking around at the other doctoral students—sharing and comparing experiences. Then I realized that I would stumble if I only looked**

**around and didn't make sure that I was on the path to creating relationships with my colleagues that would benefit us all throughout at least the rest of the IT program. At times I would see peer review groups and comps exam study groups up ahead. I would even sometimes catch a glimpse of how my research might look with the help of these colleagues. I also would look behind me and see the relationships established through prior classes.**

**The final path that I hiked this semester was that of unexpected learning. This time I hiked through the pages of Zinsser's book and learned more about good writing and hiked over the preparation of the comps exams and found some great resources. As I look back I can consider the writing ability I have accumulated from AP English to an undergraduate English degree to being a teacher of writing. I also saw behind me the knowledge that I have accumulated through my doctoral classes. Looking ahead I spotted a way to begin preparing for the comprehensive exams and a new way to revise the writing for my proposal and dissertation. Finally, as I hike this path I occasionally glimpse the mountain of my research, but most of the time the view is a bit obscured by the coming landscape.**

**If I were to serve as a guide to future hikers along these paths, I would suggest a couple things. The first is to find your passion along the trail and follow it. This may mean examining little things along the way that catch your interest—knowing that these little things might point you down a different trail that will lead you to a place of interest. The second is to always hike with friends and colleagues. Others can help you scramble over the big rocks that**

**get in your path. They can also point out a flower or animal that you did not notice along the way. And, if necessary, they can run for help.**

**I have enjoyed my adventures in this class and am pleased with the results of my hiking. My feet are a little tired, but I have seen some beautiful things, and my field notebook is overflowing with notes.**