



**Athabasca University**

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

## **FGS PRESENTS:**

### **THE RESEARCH ITINERARY SERIES – SESSION 5:**

#### **IDENTIFYING A RESEARCH PROBLEM**

**PRESENTED BY: DR. SHAUNA ZENTENO**

**DATE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2018**

**TIME: 12:00 - 1:00 P.M. (MT)**

#### **ABSTRACT:**

REGARDLESS OF THE DISCIPLINE OF STUDY, IDENTIFYING A RESEARCH PROBLEM INVOLVES A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF WORK AND PLANNING. TO PROPERLY IDENTIFY A RESEARCH PROBLEM, ONE MUST THINK ABOUT A TOPIC OF INTEREST AND THE NEEDS OR ISSUES THAT ARE EVIDENT BY FAMILIARIZING ONESELF WITH THE EXISTING RESEARCH IN THAT AREA. ESTABLISHING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IS CRITICAL TO BEING ABLE TO ASK QUESTIONS AND FORM A HYPOTHESIS AS WELL AS TO BE ABLE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH THAT IS UNIQUE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY KNOWLEDGE GAPS IN A PARTICULAR FIELD AS THESE MAY FACTOR INTO DECIDING ON A RESEARCH PROBLEM TO ADDRESS. IN ADDITION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR RESEARCH PROBLEM AND TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WHY YOU ARE DOING WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND HOW YOUR FINDINGS MAY IMPACT OTHERS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT IN GRANT WRITING AS YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO CONVINCE OTHERS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR WORK. ONCE A RESEARCH PROBLEM OR IDEA HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED YOU MUST BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT THE HYPOTHESIS AND THEN IDENTIFY THE OBJECTIVES THAT WILL ADDRESS IT. AS YOU FORMULATE YOUR OBJECTIVES YOU CAN BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY AND WHAT RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED. THIS MAY ALSO IMPACT YOUR DECISION ON A RESEARCH PROBLEM.

TYPICALLY ONCE YOU ARE ESTABLISHED IN AN AREA OF RESEARCH AND HAVE ALREADY COMPLETED A NUMBER OF PROJECTS IT BECOMES EASIER TO IDENTIFY NEW RESEARCH PROBLEMS AS OFTEN TIMES ANSWERING ONE QUESTION REVEALS MANY OTHER QUESTIONS. THIS PRESENTATION WILL FOCUS ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF A RESEARCH PROBLEM AND THE FACTORS INVOLVED IN DETERMINING THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT.