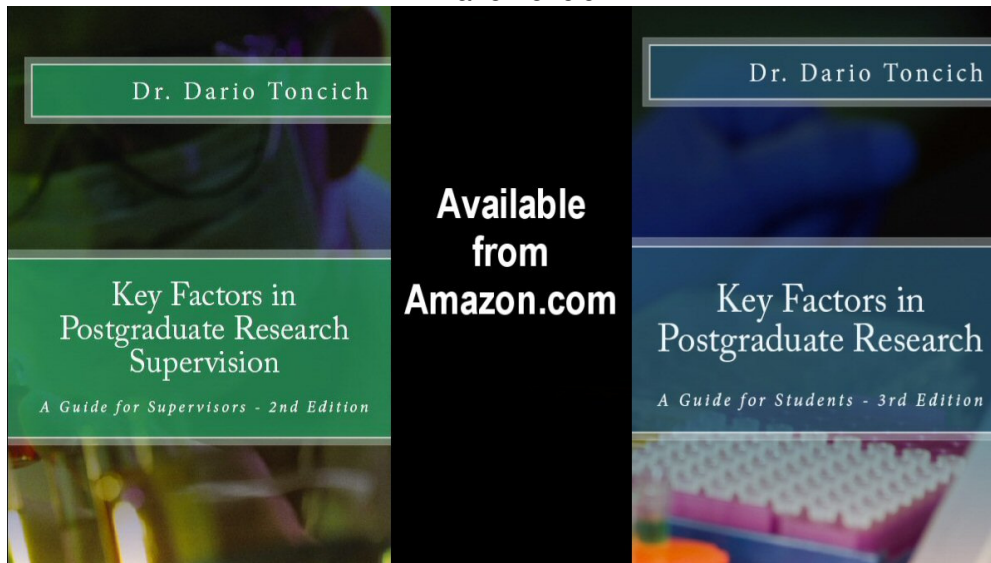


10 Fundamental Thesis Preparation Tips

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Tip Number 8 – Writing a Thesis Prior to Doing the Research

For many graduate research students, a thesis is a mere afterthought in the research process. An annoyance for the purposes of examination. From the examiner's perspective, a thesis written in this way appears exactly as the student intended it – an annoying afterthought which can be insulting to the examiner.

The primary purpose of a thesis is to provide a detailed, historical record of a program of research investigation. However, in achieving this objective, the thesis provides a detailed template for the program of research – including the methodology, experimental design and analysis, and so on.

Unfortunately for most students, it isn't just the thesis which is an afterthought. Often the design of the methodology, the design of the experiments and benchmarking is also an afterthought. Experiments/work which are critical to the central research theme are neglected and ones which contribute nothing to the theme of the research are included. This need not happen if the bulk of the thesis is written early in the research program.

Once the initial literature review has been completed, it is possible to write the bulk of the thesis, including the introduction, literature review, methodology and experimental design chapters. These chapters should form a rigorous template for the actual conduct of the research. It is also possible to write an experimental results chapter – even though no experiments have actually been performed. The author should be aware of the nature of the results which will need to be tabulated and the references or benchmarks against which they will be assessed. This means that a results template is created relative to the central research theme.

In summary, instead of treating a thesis as an unwanted burden at the end of the research process, use the thesis as an integral part of the research process to provide a roadmap for the research.