

INTERVIEWING AN EXPERT RESEARCHER

Rodrigo Escobar

Research Seminar - UTSA

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Expert Researcher: David Akopian, PhD.

1. How do you start research?

First thing should be literature review. There are many people working in similar areas. Thus it is very good to get an idea of what other people are doing and then try to position yourself in that universe. It is very hardly possible that everything is already done, so do not stop trying to find a new research problem.

2. What specific tools do you use?

All of the tools presented by the book. The library is very useful for literature review. Even if it is an online library, it is still a library. Measurements are used all the time in experimental research. You can have measurements taken by a research partner, sponsor or yourself. There are data that you are observing and analyzing. Statistics are necessary if you have measurements and you want to characterize them. However, we don't do much of that. Language is very important for presenting your work. You basically need to present it in a very clear and concisely way, and try to look at it with eyes of reviewers.

3. How did you gain expertise with the tools you use?

The expertise comes with time. After some time it becomes easier for you to know how to use different tools for your research. It is difficult to formulate how you gain expertise with a specific tool.

4. What are some important experiences you suggest for a novice researcher?

Novice researchers think they should do something big. Something like discovering America. They should think of incremental steps. That is not saying they should be mediocre but they should have realistic expectations.