

Full name *Dr. Naziha Ali Raza*

What subject did you study? *EdD TESOL*

Year of Graduation *2010*

Current Job Title *Director Training & Development*

Current Employer/Organisation Name *Lahore University of Management & Sciences*

What have you been doing since leaving Exeter, and what are you doing now?

I gained my EdD TESOL in 2010 and since then I've followed my passion of continuous professional development by initiating 'outreach' teacher development projects in Pakistan. I've also extensively engaged with teacher development initiatives in the Middle East, been president of a large teachers' association in UAE and conducted research in the field of CPD. I make it a point to participate in both TESOL International & IATEFL (ELT conferences) to share my research each year. My journey following the EdD has been largely in researching the field of teacher education as well as supporting teacher development. I'm now employed as Director of Training & Development at a prestigious university in Lahore, managing their professional development institute after spending 17 years in the UAE as a training and development specialist at Emirates Airline.

Why did you choose this career? And what do you enjoy most about your work?

I enjoyed studying most of my life and it made me think about ongoing development. This is why although my career originated in teaching ESL, I gradually moved into training and developing teachers. I've always wanted to support the development of teachers in regions where resources are scarce. I love working with adults, new teachers and mid-career teachers. I enjoy exploring their reasons for doing things the way they do and what I love most is to see the change and greater commitment when teachers begin to understand the value of their input each day.

What did you enjoy most about studying here?

The library was my favourite area. I flew from Dubai, UAE to participate in the summer modules. I loved the fact that my supervisors were available when I needed them most. I remember the beautiful St. Lukes Campus both in the rain and sun. Overall, the university provided a secure environment with all facilities required by research students who fly in from other regions around the world to engage in brief study periods before returning to work.

Why did you choose to study at Exeter?

The University of Exeter School of Education & Lifelong Learning offered a doctoral programme that seemed exciting and different from others at the time. That apart, the faculty were approachable and welcoming. I've always felt that I made a great decision by choosing to study at Exeter.

What skills and experiences have been most useful for your career?

Patience & perseverance. In extended duration programmes, one often tends to feel lost after a period of time. The key is to stop, rethink and reinstate yourself. I also found that having a counselor or mentor at the university was of great help at a time when I considered dropping out of the doctoral programme. Over the duration of study, I also developed and refined my skills in organising and recording information in a very focused manner. This has been advantageous in that I now find myself supporting other doctoral students in refining their research proposals.

What advice would you give to a current student who wishes to pursue your career?

The one advice that I always pass on to prospective doctoral students is that it isn't the degree that will get you a better job; it is what you do with that degree & your research after having attained it that will take you places.

What are your plans for the future?

Around the conclusion of my doctoral degree I initiated outreach teacher development programmes in regions where I could. I have a successful teacher development initiative running in Pakistan at the moment and would like to formally expand it in other areas in Pakistan as well beyond Pakistan. Teachers here and in many neighbouring areas (including some Middle Eastern regions) require support as development resources are insufficient. I would love to have my university involved in some of my projects.

Do you have any tips or advice for beginning a career or working in your industry/sector?

Start small, keep your focus on the goal and keep at it. The end product that you see in successful individuals is the result of decades of work and not overnight. Most importantly, you don't need to take this journey alone; it is useful to have a professional friend who can be the mentor in times of need.