

Dr. Yasmin Lalani



Tell us about your role at Humber.

I am a Research Associate in Qualitative Methods at the Humber's Research Institute. Qualitative research is about uncovering meaning in human experiences. Interviewing people or observing them in natural settings are common methods to gather such data. My role mainly involves designing qualitative study components, harnessing my soft people skills in data collection, and analyzing the data. Results can have several uses such as tailoring interventions or understanding a group's unmet needs.

Tell us about your academic journey.

My academic journey has been an ongoing adventure. In my first career, I spent ten years as a teacher, starting in London, UK. I worked as a music teacher at a boys' Catholic high school in a deprived area, where violence, low academic achievement, and teacher burnout were the norm. I was assigned to a "music room" that had only desks, chairs, and a broken piano. This turbulent environment ignited my interest in "boy culture" in Britain and teacher authority. Pursuing a Master's in Education, I conducted an ethnography exploring women teachers' professional authority in this chaotic, all-male school. My interest in gender, education, and culture led me to a PhD, studying women's HIV prevention activism among sex workers and housewives in Peru's Amazon region. My second career as a qualitative researcher continues to satisfy my free spirit and genuine interest in understanding the richness of people's everyday lives and cultural features; first-person data like this is essential in healthcare to create solutions that meet people's needs. Since joining Humber in 2021, I've been enjoying connecting with patients and staff, applying my qualitative lens in this innovative setting.

How has your academic journey contributed to your professional growth?

My academic journey has challenged me to quickly learn the fundamentals of new clinical areas and creative qualitative methods, allowing me to design studies, oversee their design and analysis, and personally engage in thoughtful data analysis. This includes gaining an understanding of the populations, therapeutic contexts, and key scholars relevant to each study. To date, I've contributed to interdisciplinary projects in neonatal care, child welfare, migrant workers' mental health and health professions education, among others. Collaborating across disciplines has widened my expertise, and I'm eager to continue learning from staff, physicians, volunteers, and patients at Humber.

What advice do you have for those furthering their academics while maintaining a full-time career?

My advice would be to "find the play" in your academic work. Academia does not have to be a chore; it can be dynamic and creative. Ideas pop into our heads all the time. Pay attention to the times when you're not thinking about your work, but an "ah ha moment" comes to you while you're busy doing something completely unrelated. Don't ignore these meaningful cues of your thought process—write them down!