



VISHALACHE BALAKRISHNAN

## Action Speaks Louder than Words: Voices of the Oppressed

**ABSTRACT:** With current development of violent and extremism among adolescents, there is a great need to revert to research and analyse the process that young people are undergoing during their childhood and adolescent age. Previous and current research in most developing nations is focused mainly on quantitative data and excellence: academic, sports, and other aspects. Such data might make it big in journals and world reports, but not to the lives of adolescents. However, this trend of being the best in everything is causing much stress among growing young adults and less freedom and liberty for adolescence to voice their opinions, their needs, and their lives. The need for a holistic education, where young people are taught to enable themselves to balance the different aspects of life, is becoming a popular phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, charting their future without allowing space for adolescents to voice their opinions, their needs, and their disagreements through mutual respect and dignity is sadly still lacking in the current digital era. This article aims to capture the lives of adolescents in such a situation and provide the alternative avenue of listening to the "oppressed". It is proposed that adolescence, who are empowered, tend to have a better control of their daily life conflicts when they become adults. Including adolescents as researchers in action research, such as participatory action research, enables them to understand their role in a wider spectrum and a space to grow and develop.

**KEY WORD:** Adolescents; Empowerment; Voices of the Oppressed; Participatory Action Research; Grow and Develop.

**RINGKASAN:** "Tindakan Bercakap Lebih Banyak daripada Perkataan: Suara yang Ditindas". Dengan perkembangan semasa bersabit keganasan dan tindakan melampau di kalangan remaja, terdapat keperluan untuk kembali ke penyelidikan dan menganalisis proses yang dilakukan oleh belia semasa zaman kanak-kanak dan remaja. Penyelidikan sebelumnya dan semasa di kebanyakan negara membangun lebih menumpukan kepada data kuantitatif dan kecemerlangan: akademik, sukan, dan aspek lain. Data sedemikian mungkin membuatnya besar dalam jurnal dan laporan dunia, tetapi bukan untuk kehidupan remaja. Walau bagaimanapun, trend ini menjadi terbaik dalam segala hal yang menyebabkan banyak tekanan di kalangan orang dewasa yang masih belia dan kurang keleluasaan dan kebebasan untuk remaja dalam menyuarakan pendapat mereka, keperluan mereka, dan kehidupan mereka. Keperluan untuk pendidikan holistik, di mana orang muda diajar untuk membolehkan mereka mengimbangi pelbagai aspek kehidupan, menjadi fenomena yang popular pada abad ke-21. Walau bagaimanapun, menggambarkan masa depan mereka tanpa memberi peluang kepada remaja untuk menyuarakan pandangan mereka, keperluan mereka, dan perselisihan mereka melalui penghormatan dan martabat bersama adalah menyedihkan pasal masih kurang dalam era digital semasa. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menangkap kehidupan remaja dalam keadaan sedemikian dan menyediakan jalan alternatif untuk mendengar "yang tertindas". Adalah dicadangkan bahawa remaja, bila diberi kuasa, cenderung mempunyai kawalan yang lebih baik dalam konflik kehidupan seharian mereka apabila mereka menjadi orang dewasa. Termasuk remaja sebagai pengkaji dalam penyelidikan tindakan, seperti penyelidikan tindakan partisipatif, memungkinkan mereka untuk memahami peranan mereka dalam spektrum yang lebih luas dan ruang untuk maju dan berkembang.

**KATA KUNCI:** Remaja; Pemberdayaan; Suara yang Ditindas; Penyelidikan Tindakan Partisipatif; Tumbuh dan Membangunkan.

**About the Author:** Vishalache Balakrishnan, Ph.D. is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Education UM (University of Malaya) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. For academic interests, the Author is able to be contacted via e-mail at: [visha@um.edu.my](mailto:visha@um.edu.my)

**Suggested Citation:** Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2019). "Action Speaks Louder than Words: Voices of the Oppressed" in ATIKAN: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan, Volume 9(1), June, pp.39-52. Bandung, Indonesia: Minda Masagi Press owned by ASPENSI with print-ISSN 2088-1290 and online-ISSN 2714-6243.

**Article Timeline:** Accepted (March 2, 2019); Revised (April 21, 2019); and Published (June 30, 2019).

## INTRODUCTION

Being an action oriented individual, I have always been fascinated about the power of action; and how it can transform individuals and groups, when effort is put together or resolutions geared towards movement. Dynamism has been my motto and action based research my undertakings. Thus, when I embarked into post graduate research, I had nothing but action research in mind. I always challenge my own ability and current world views about action research to ensure that the methodology I select is of use and generates new knowledge into the current academia pool of knowledge (cf Reilly, 1998; Balakrishnan, 2009; and Pettit, 2010).

Using a qualitative approach and literature study (Fink, 2005; Bearfield & Eller, 2007; Balakrishnan, 2009; Tummers & Karsten, 2012; and Narinasamy, 2013), and also based on my experiences in doing Action Research, this article would like to review and examine the matters relating to: *PAR (Participatory Action Research); PAR and Moral Education; Words versus Action; Why Action Spoke Louder than Words?*; and *Reflections*.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**PAR (Participatory Action Research).** In my doctoral studies, I used one aspect of action research which is PAR. Though it is spiral in nature, PAR differs from action research, because it is undertaken collaboratively by co participants (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1998; Gibbon, 2002; Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017; and Benjamin-Thomas *et al.*, 2018). This collaborative social process of learning is described by J. Habermas (1994), and other scholars, as an open communicative process realised by people, who collaborate to change the practices through which they communicate in a shared social world; and where they live with the consequences of one another's actions (Habermas, 1994; Dillenburg *et al.*, 1996; and Hammond, 2017).

PAR is a significant methodology for intervention, development, and change within communities and groups. PAR integrates research and action, and with the appropriate tools and information everyone is a researcher (Kuumba & Ajanaku, 1996; MacDonald, 2012;

and Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). PAR is a recognised form of research that prioritises the effects of the researcher's direct actions of practice within a participatory community – in my case the ME (Moral Education) students – with the goal of improving the performance quality of the community or an area of concern (cf Hult & Lennung, 1980; McNiff, 1988; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Balakrishnan, 2011; MacDonald, 2012; and Morales, 2016).

According to Y. Wadsworth (1998), and other scholars, PAR involves concerned parties analysing current action, which is considered problematic in order to improve it. PAR hopes for action which is researched, changed, and re-researched by participants within the research process (Wadsworth, 1998; MacDonald, 2012; and Morales, 2016).

With regards to my research, I hoped that the outcomes enabled the improvement of teaching of ME in Malaysian secondary schools (Balakrishnan, 2009, 2010, and 2014). Why did I become so passionate about PAR? Within a PAR process, people create knowledge which is simultaneously a tool for the education and development of consciousness as well as mobilisation for action (Gaventa, 1991; MacDonald, 2012; Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017; Tetui, 2017; and Morales, 2016). PAR is a participatory, democratic, practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Khan & Chovanec, 2010; and Morales, 2016).

R. McTaggart (1997), and other scholars, used PAR to emphasise both authentic participation and relevancy of actions (McTaggart, 1997; MacDonald, 2012; and Benjamin-Thomas *et al.*, 2018). J. Habermas (1987), and other scholars, are also well-known for calling emancipation practice the life world, where sharing power with poor and oppressed people gives voice to their decision-making and control to regenerate citizenship (cf Habermas, 1987; McKnight, 1987; Burgess, 1995; Kemmis, 2001; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003; Balakrishnan, 2009; and Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016).

In my doctoral research, students were in the position of “oppressed” in the sense

that they seldom had a chance to express their views, their problems, and their voices in the ME classroom (Balakrishnan, 2009). The underpinning ethic of open communication with the other contains a hope that the other will hold the same view (Habermas, 1987; Balakrishnan, 2009; Grunig, 2014; Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016; and Hammond, 2017).

The process is also similar to the “just community” schools in America, where students wrestled with everyday dilemmas, community decisions, empowering students, egalitarianism, caring community, and democratic decision-making (Power, Higgins & Kohlberg, 1989; Balakrishnan, 2009; and Greene, 2014). However, there are differences in the Malaysian situation, such as ME framework, government policies, and cultural differences (Balakrishnan, 2009 and 2017a; Narinasamy, 2013; and Mahmood, 2014).

The hope I had in my research is that students will respond to ME and be part of the syllabus and be able to benefit from the ME subject not just cognitively, but also through emotions and action. While students are always present in the ME classroom, they are not heard. Information is not power, but information that the students provide might be powerful (cf Balakrishnan, 2009 and 2017b; Gablinske, 2014; and Mahmood, 2014). Boundaries become permeable membranes, where meanings and commitments flow between lives; and people perceive themselves not as separate entities, though still unique individuals, but as sharing the same life space as others (Capra, 2002; Whitehead, 2005; Balakrishnan, 2009; Kannegieter, 2010; and Houtum, Kramsch & Zierhofer eds., 2013).

**PAR and Moral Education.** PAR (Participatory Action Research) begins with issues that emerge from day to day living. PAR builds on P. Freire (1986)’s critical pedagogy, which responds to traditional formal models of education where the teacher stands at the front and imparts information to the students (cf Freire, 1986; Balakrishnan, 2009; MacDonald, 2012; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013; and Brun, 2016).

In my research, students began with their

own real-life dilemmas, proceed through the process of PAR, and the expectation is that, with the help of capable peers as suggested by L.S. Vygotsky (1978), they might be able to take action on resolving their own moral conflicts. PAR involves a broad range of community participants to choose the issue or problem that is within their sphere of influence (Vygotsky, 1978; Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016; and Benjamin-Thomas *et al.*, 2018).

S. Kemmis (2001), and other scholars, speak of opening communicative space for progressive mutual understanding, authentic engagement, and consensus on and about action (Kemmis, 2001; Franco, 2005; and Burgess, 2006). Each phase of the unfolding inquiry process has iterative cycles of self-learning, reflection, and action (Lewin & Greenwood, 2001; Heen, 2005; Koch *et al.*, 2005; Burgess, 2006; and Buzza *et al.*, 2013).

Throughout this study, students participated through active communication to mediate between the private concerns of their moral conflicts within self, familial, and social life contrasted to the demands and concerns of social and public life (Habermas, 1987; Kellner, 2014; and Balakrishnan, 2016).

The process of PAR in my research used several ideas of J. Habermas (1987)’s model of communicative rationality that takes into account the effect of power sharing. He opposes the traditional idea of an objective and functionalist reason. Students involved in my research were offered the space to talk, discuss, and argue about how their real-life moral dilemmas can be resolved within the constraints of a society with absolute cultural and historical norms. Students were invited to take charge of their own decisions (cf Habermas, 1987; Kemmis, 2001; Balakrishnan, 2009 and 2016; MacDonald, 2012; and Kellner, 2014).

However, the focus of this chapter is to share the surprises that I encountered which I hardly anticipated during the planning and execution of my research. The fact that action speaks louder than words was a reality in certain dilemma discussions, which action researchers can reflect upon.

**Words versus Action.** The whole research was based on the Re-LiMDD (Real-Life Moral

Dilemma Discussion), which I initiated as an alternative method to teach ME (Moral Education) in a creative way to engage students in the ME classroom. The first phase was construction of dilemmas by students, which students themselves faced in their daily lives. The moral dilemmas were, then, constructed into general moral dilemmas to ensure that no names were mentioned to ensure safety, confidentiality, and anonymity of the PAR (Participatory Action Research) participants (Balakrishnan, 2009; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2010; and Ryan, 2017).

Once the moral dilemmas were ready, the discussion face continued, and students carried on several circles of discussions before the reflective cycle. Initial discussions were based on my participants' voices in their own reflections and several excerpts are taken from the PAR reflective cycles. During the reflective cycle, students reflected and commented upon the PAR process that they had experienced. They spoke about the mood of their discussions, their feelings, and their experiences; how the studying of ME in other ways was viewed, as well as the meaning of the whole process. They explained how the discussions had led them to react morally (Balakrishnan, 2009; Brun, 2016; Shukie, 2017; and DiPietro, 2018).

This is also where I as a researcher had to play my role in bringing out the students built-in feelings, which in normal ME classes was hardly explored. They were most concerned about the process that they undergone and how they felt about the whole research. Most of the time, they were positive about the process but they also retained a practical and realistic view of what was practical or vice versa (Balakrishnan, 2009; Gulati & Pant, 2017; and Ryan, 2017).

According to J.A. Banks (2006), and other scholars, when students are able to participate in processes where they formulate and construct various knowledge forms, they are able to understand how different groups within a society formulate, shape, and disseminate knowledge. In almost all dilemmas presented, the students were trying to analyse why such conflicts exist and how different people would react in the given

dilemmas. Students themselves challenged the perspectives in the Re-LiMDD; and with the help of different capable peers, they came to certain resolutions which took them to deeper levels of analysing and resolving the conflicts (Banks, 2006; Balakrishnan, 2017c; and Timperley *et al.*, 2017).

**Why Action Spoke Louder than Words?** In most circles of discussions, students were trying to understand what they or their peers were undergoing and how they can reach different solutions and alternatives to resolve such moral dilemmas. According to P.C. Murrell (2007), and other scholars, dilemmas are different from problems as dilemmas involve choices, in which each alternative has both positive and negative aspects. And resolving the moral dilemma of diversity is not a matter of reaching a solution or coming to a consensus, but is a matter of determining whether one's favoured choice has enough of the positive such that one can live with the negative (Murrell, 2007; Balakrishnan, 2009; and Christensen & Boneck, 2010).

The connections made here show that the students learnt to analyse conflicts from multiple angles, even though they had their own ideas and opinions about the moral conflicts discussed. The students were in a caring environment, where they were free to speak for themselves and their peers (Balakrishnan, 2009; McKay & Whitehouse, 2015; and Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2019). As N. Noddings (1997) relates as following here:

*We are called upon to listen, to respond to others according to their needs, not according to their membership in a symbolic community or according to universal rules that they themselves may reject (Noddings, 1997:67).*

It was indeed a challenge for my participants to take turns, provide responses, and even to argue when they disagreed. But, because they all shared the knowledge and empowerment, they were engaged in healthy discussion cycles which improved their moral thinking and moral feelings, and led to moral action in certain instances (Balakrishnan, 2009; Kolzow, 2014; and Alosaimi, 2016).

In several circles of discussions, I as the researcher had to be sensitive to the



different actions and body language that the students displayed. Though words, phrases, and sentences were freely flowing from every participant, there were moments when students stayed mum and it was a clear sign that there was some agreement or disagreement going on (Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall eds., 2009; Holmes, 2013; and Balakrishnan, 2016).

In this particular Re-LiMDD (Real-Life Moral Dilemma Discussion), the actions that the participants showed gave me the insight to act accordingly to bring the best in the students themselves (Begley, 2006; Balakrishnan, 2009 and 2017c; and Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017).

#### **Moral dilemma: Respect versus Authority.**

*My Science teacher is my worst nightmare. She torments the minds of her students as half of us can't seem to understand what she talks about. She doesn't care about class discipline, or respect us as students. Half of the girls would be sleepy, half "dead" or doing their homework during Science as they want to make the best out of time.*

*It's not that we don't want to study [...] we want to [...] basically I love Science, but this teacher makes me despise the subject. I've tried to listen to her and pay attention to her teachings, but I can't.*

*Many students have tried talking to the teacher and politely voiced concerns about her teaching. But, she doesn't seem to bother. She believes that passing the examination is good enough. But, we want to excel and make use of the Science that we learn. I wish we could talk this out with her (Dilemma 4# Kekwah).<sup>1</sup>*

Listening is one of the most valued qualities of an educator – but is all too often lacking (Taylor, 1996; Ahmed, 2015; and Nombre, 2015). According to L.E. Shapiro (2008), and other scholars, when one individual listens to the feelings of others in a respectful way, people will like that person better and treat him or her better too (Bloch, 1993; Shapiro, 2008; and Gilligan & Eddy, 2017).

The student in the above dilemma feels that the lack of mutual respect between teacher and students is the cause of the conflict above. They want to be listened to and be respected in mutual ways. Here is an

<sup>1</sup>Note: *Kekwah* is the pseudonym chosen by the PAR (Participatory Action Research) students to represent their school.

excerpt based on the dilemma above, which details why the participants were having conflict with the Science teacher:

*E: When we ask her, she writes concepts like "F = Ma", that's it [...] what it represents also we don't know. Instead of clearing our minds, she confuses us.*

*F: She always says, "You're all intelligent students, so you should find things out for yourselves".*

*A: Because of her, Science has become a boring, rote learning subject. We don't go to labs to do experiments. We do badly in our examination and get scolded at home.*

*C: She always says that Science is not a girls' subject. Even, if we get minimal grades, she says it's good enough.*

*E: But that's not fair, because some of us love Science and want to excel in that subject.*

*F: I feel there's no girl or guy subjects, so the teacher shouldn't put such ideas into our heads (Kekwah).<sup>2</sup>*

By the end of this cycle, some students expressed how they felt about sharing with their friends during the PAR (Participatory Action Research) cycle. The journal extract below explains how relieved one participant was, when she found that her dilemma with the Science teacher was not just her conflict alone:

*Since the start of this year, I have been stressed every time I go for Science, because the teacher seems to be in her own world. I can't understand what is being taught. I have tried telling her, but it was no use. Now, I am relieved because some of my friends too have the same problem. I hope we can do something about it (Kekwah).*

In my own observational journal, I have written how the students were using body gestures, such as nodding of head and *main mata* (showing eyes) to each other when they were discussing this dilemma and agreeing with each other that by just presenting content in the Science subject; the teacher concerned was not respecting them as students in the classroom. However, there were two participants who kept quiet throughout the initial cycles of discussion and I had to probe them every time the others were condemning the Science teacher. Their

<sup>2</sup>[NVC = Non Verbal Communication: Several participants were giving piercing looks and nodding their heads every now; and, then, EFVR = Evidence From Video Recording].

action of keeping quiet made me reflect and I knew I had to act to ensure power was shared by all (cf Balakrishnan, 2009; Burns, 2010; and Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016).

In the following PAR (Participatory Action Research) cycle, students had just finished that particular Science teacher's lesson, before they came to see me. They had more to say in this session:

*H: She says we are smart students, so we should find things out on our own.*

*A: She says Science is not a girl's subject, so if we get minimal grades its good enough.*

*B: But that's not fair, because some of us want to excel in Science (Kekwah).<sup>3</sup>*

At this stage, the participants (except for the quiet duo) were all getting very emotional about their Science teacher. They appeared unable to rationalise anything that the Science teacher does and feel that she is to be blamed for their boredom in class, their sleeping in class, and their minimal grades (cf Balakrishnan, 2009; Hendrickson, 2010; and Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2019).

The two students who remained quiet, just observing their friends complaining throughout this and the previous cycle appeared to be disagreeing with the rest of the group. Based on video evidence, they were communicating with each other through body language – specifically, looking at each other and shaking their heads from left to right (as a sign of disagreement with the other members of the group). However, they were neither agreeing nor disagreeing with their friends verbally (Pfeiffer, 1998; Balakrishnan, 2009; and Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017).

From their body gestures (hardly any nodding but looking doubtful when other participants kept complaining about the Science teacher), I realised that they might have something to share with the group. So, I questioned them specifically and here is part of their response discussion which indicates

<sup>3</sup>[NVC = Non Verbal Communication: The two participants who were changing quiet glances at each other in the previous PAR (Participatory Action Research) cycle kept quiet, while the rest of the group got louder with their voices, heads nodding in agreement, and piercing eyes with lots of hand and body movements; and, then, EFVR = Evidence From Video Recording].

that their action, which I observed had a certain meaning:

*F: Maybe we should not sleep in class anymore, but we need to get the message across to her about how we feel in class.*

*D: We can talk to her as a class or send our class monitor as the representative. There are a few alternatives, so we can try different ways and see which brings the best outcome.*

*F: We've got to be patient with her too [...] poor old teacher (Kekwah).<sup>4</sup>*

The above excerpt shows the input of the capable duo that was quiet in the earlier PAR (Participatory Action Research) cycle but who, after encouragement to talk, gave a different viewpoint on the whole dilemma (Balakrishnan, 2009; MacDonald, 2012; and Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). After these two participants gave their views, the rest of the group were not so emotional, but started to complain less and reflect on the issue. Some even agreed with the first quiet duo as shown in the excerpt below:

*A: Maybe F is right. Maybe we don't understand the teacher.*

*H: We might have to think of her too (Kekwah).<sup>5</sup>*

After listening to the capable duo, the students were analysing the conflict within themselves too. We had to stop our session at this point and they filled in their conflict resolution journals. What happened within the next two weeks was the transformation from words to action in the participants part (Miall, 2004; Balakrishnan, 2011; and Incerti-Thery, 2016).

In the next PAR (Participatory Action Research) cycle, which was the reflective session for the Science teacher dilemma, my participants shared with me that they had spoken to the teacher concerned. She was shocked when they expressed that they cared and respected her, but felt they needed it

<sup>4</sup>[NVC = Non Verbal Communication: Two participants who had previously been silent spoke softly, but looked at each other every now and then. As for the rest of the group, they kept quiet and started to look less aggressive. Some even were looking down and reflecting on their own; and, then, EFVR = Evidence From Video Recording].

<sup>5</sup>[NVC = Non Verbal Communication: The two quiet participants who gave their views earlier smiled and nodded, and the rest of the group were slowly nodding their heads; and, then, EFVR = Evidence From Video Recording].

to be both ways. The teacher was not angry with them, but welcomed more such open dialogue with the class, so that they can progress together. She apologised for being insensitive to their behaviours in class. She did remind them that she was going to be stricter, but the group did not mind as long as she understood and respected them. It was a mature act on part of both students and teacher and it reflects how action spoke louder than words (Ryan, 2001; Balakrishnan, 2009; and Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016).

During the initial cycles of my PAR research, the two capable peers who helped the group see alternatives within the conflict did not speak up. As the researcher, I encouraged them to share what their stand was. This was based on my observation of their body language and in the video evidence (especially their facial expressions which showed anger and doubt), which indicated disagreement when the other members of the group kept complaining about the Science teacher. But, because they saw and were able to present a different perspective from the rest of the group, they seemed to be the more capable peers who in ZCD (Zone of Current Development) terms could start the others thinking and looking at the teacher from different perspectives (cf Balakrishnan, 2009; Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016; and Bambaeroo & Shokerpour, 2017).

According to L.E. Shapiro (2008), and other scholars, facial expression is an important way to communicate feelings with others. If an individual gives angry or mean looks to people, who care about them or to people who are trying to help them, it is as bad as yelling at them (Shapiro, 2008; Leary, 2015; and Pogosyan & Engelmann, 2017).

I noticed during the discussion session that these two *Kekwah* participants were passing such expressions to each other and other members of the group. When I later spoke to these two participants, they told me that the Science teacher was a nice person, but because she could not deliver proficiently in English, she always kept to herself (cf Balakrishnan, 2009 and 2011; Mansfield & Woods-McConney, 2012; and Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016).

When my group and some of their other classmates had a discussion with the teacher, she was happy that the students cared and respected her. She understood the problems of the students and hoped to work with them. The other members of my group also saw the actual problem that their Science teacher faced and had empathy for her. It is worth noting that what started as a group collaboration ended with the individual members reflecting upon the issue; and what is even more meaningful is the decision or the action that they took upon themselves – to meet up and discuss the issue with the teacher (cf Balakrishnan, 2009 and 2016; Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016; and Hilliker, 2018).

Feeling was involved in the identification of dilemma with the Science teacher, thinking was required for discussing the appropriateness of possible decisions, and action taken in the reflective decisions which led to real moral action taken and reflected upon again at another time (Balakrishnan, 2009; Bairaktarova & Woodcock, 2017; and Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2019).

**Reflections.** The *Kekwah* participants were engaged in a social constructivism type of decision-making. According to R.R. Cottone (2001), and other scholars, this type of decision making involves interaction with other individuals. The interactive process between the *Kekwah* participants that involved voicing issues, negotiating, and reaching consensus led them to take the moral action which they reflected in the reflective session (Cottone, 2001; Balakrishnan, 2009; and Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017).

With the PAR (Participatory Action Research), the students' experiences expand and they are able to resolve more complex dilemmas but still within the relational perspective. This is one gap that I see consistently between my research and the current ME (Moral Education) syllabus for secondary schools. The key difference between the present ME syllabus and the findings of my research is that the syllabus states values and learning areas in a non-relational manner far from the students' experiential daily lives (Balakrishnan, 2009; Ozer, Ritterman & Wanis, 2010; and



Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016).

Incidences as the above are common scenarios in action research process. Both researcher and participants, and fully absorbed in the process of transformation, and researchers need to be extra sensitive to the climate of the action cycles; and how they can encourage healthy discussions at times when sessions get tensed. The non-verbal communication made the interactive and collaborative links between the students richer, and was themselves worth analysing (Ryan, 2001 and 2014; Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2006; and Balakrishnan, 2009).

According to R.L. Garcia (1991), and other scholars, non-verbal communication often conveys unconscious cultural bias. As explained, at different times during the PAR cycles, the students were signalling each other non-verbally and it is important to be able to respond to such gestures (Garcia, 1991; Wigham, 2012; and Bambaerero & Shokerpour, 2017).

If I had not been sensitive to the non-verbal interactive gestures, that the interested quiet duo was exchanging, I might have assumed that they were not keen on the dilemma analysed. But, because I saw them being silent and exchanging “eye talk” and “head shakes” with each other when others were complaining, and because I invited them to provide their view point, they emerged as the capable peers as suggested by L.S. Vygotsky (1978) in his theory on the ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development). Participants’ body language provided me with great insights that supported the verbal discussions that were taking place (cf Vygotsky, 1978; Balakrishnan, 2009; Balakrishnan & Narvaez, 2016; Shabani, 2016; and Karimi-Aghdam, 2017).

Overall, the students found the research process meaningful compared to what they had previously been doing in ME. They related to the real-life dilemmas presented, provided alternatives for resolving the conflicts, and even applied some of the choices suggested during the PAR cycles. The use of group discussion in my research enable my participants not only to analyse their own action, but also to be able to learn from previous mistakes based on their own actions or their friends’ experiences and sharing

(Balakrishnan, 2009; Ozer, Ritterman & Wanis, 2010; and Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017).

Thus, the important element that made this research process meaningful to them was being able to relate to what is in the ME syllabus. They collaborated with friends, learnt from each other, and individually practised skills learnt. The journal extract below explains how the process was meaningful to one participant in terms of what she learnt and how she hopes to react in the future:

*We learnt to deal with our conflicts more effectively and discussions like this bring us closer together as we understand each other's conflicts. We learn to think how to resolve our conflicts. So, in future, we'll know how to deal with our conflicts (Kekwah).*

Through the research, I found that students want to be involved in whatever that is taking place in the classroom. They were involved in the collaborative and interactive stages. Later, they reflected upon the PAR (Participatory Action Research) process and found that they learnt to analyse and resolve their conflicts. They felt the attachment that they developed towards their friends made the PAR process meaningful to them (cf Balakrishnan, 2009; Ozer, Ritterman & Wanis, 2010; Morales, 2016; Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017; and Tetui, 2017). The journal extract below explains the reflection of one participant from Kekwah:

*I am more prepared to face conflicts in my house with my brothers and sisters now. I will speak up if I'm not happy with their attitude and get my parents to interfere if I have to. The moral discussions with my friends have taught me how to handle my family conflicts better and in life (Kekwah).*

Though my participants were honest and open in their views, I would still consider the restraints placed on students’ freedom to express their views were inevitable, due to unequal power distribution between researcher and participants. I am aware of the possibility that they might not want to say anything too negative or to hurt my feelings. However, the verbal and non-verbal data that I analysed provided in-depth data for my research (cf Balakrishnan, 2009; MacDonald,



2012; Wigham, 2012; Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017; and Davey, Burke & Shaw, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

In a world of research that is becoming more digital, structured, and quantitative, there is serious need to allow freedom for qualitative research, especially PAR (Participatory Action Research), which empowers researchers and participants to move forward with research and allow research to take its form and structure.

Action spoke louder than words for both, researcher and participants; and as mentioned by the student above, the process underwent would equip participants to face family and the world and their lives. As a researcher, the whole research process had been very in-depth in the sense that the findings and insights I received and worked upon was such an invaluable research process.

**Future Trends.** All the more there is need to future venture into action research, where there might be shocks and surprises that go beyond words and provide a new dimension for the digital era.<sup>6</sup>

## References

- Ahmed, Raphael. (2015). "Five Essential Listening Skills for English Learners" in *British Council*, on June 18. Available online also at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/five-essential-listening-skills-english-learners> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Alosaimi, Mansour. (2016). "The Role of Knowledge Management Approaches for Enhancing and Supporting Education" in *Business Administration*. Published by Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris. Available online also at: <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01816021/document> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Bairaktarova, Diana & Anna Woodcock. (2017). "Engineering Student's Ethical Awareness and Behavior: A New Motivational Model" in *Science and Engineering Ethics*, Volume 23(4), pp.1129-1157. Available online also at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5539265/> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2009). "Teaching Moral Education in Secondary Schools Using Real-Life Dilemmas". *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*. UK [United Kingdom]: Victoria University of Wellington. Available online also at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41336363.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2010). "The Development of Moral Education in Malaysia" in *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, Volume 25, pp.89-101. Available online also at: [http://web.usm.my/apjee/APJEE\\_25\\_2010/APJEE\\_25\\_06\\_Vishalache%20\(89-101\).pdf](http://web.usm.my/apjee/APJEE_25_2010/APJEE_25_06_Vishalache%20(89-101).pdf) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2011). "Real-Life Dilemma Resolution among Malaysian Adolescents: A Case Study" in *i-Manager's Journal of Educational Technology*, Volume 8(2), pp.48-66. Available online also at: <https://doi.org/10.26634/jet.8.2.1633> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2014). "Thinking Maps in Moral Education". Available online at: [http://eprints.um.edu.my/13029/1/Thinking\\_Maps\\_in\\_Moral\\_Education.doc](http://eprints.um.edu.my/13029/1/Thinking_Maps_in_Moral_Education.doc) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2016). "Pandangan Pelajar Universiti Malaya dan Pelajar Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Bandung tentang Isu Sosial Semasa: Satu Perbandingan" in *AJTLHE: ASEAN Journal of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education*, Vol.8, No.1. Available online also at: <http://ejournal.ukm.my/ajtlhe/article/view/17928> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2017a). "Making Moral Education Work in a Multicultural Society with Islamic Hegemony" in *Journal of Moral Education*, Volume 46, pp.79-87. Available online also at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03057240.2016.1268111> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2017b). "Transformation in Moral Education" in *New Straits Times*, on December 20. Available online also at: <https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2017/12/316383/transformation-moral-education> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache. (2017c). "An Alternative Educational Pedagogy for Civic and Moral Education: Real-Life Moral Dilemma Discussion (Re-LiMDD)" in *Hong Kong Journal of Catholic Studies: Teaching Catholic Social Ethics and Civic Education*, No.8, pp.215-243. Available online also at: [http://catholic3.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/ch/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/01/Journal-8\\_23Jan2018\\_all\\_400pages\\_questionnaire.pdf](http://catholic3.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/ch/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2018/01/Journal-8_23Jan2018_all_400pages_questionnaire.pdf) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].

<sup>6</sup>**Statement:** This is to certify that the manuscript is an original work by me based on the research. I have duly acknowledged the work(s) of others I used in writing this article/manuscript. I have duly cited all such work(s) in the text as well in the list of the References, and that I have presented within quotes all the original sentences and phrases, etc. taken from the sources, which I have consulted in writing this article/manuscript. I, further, declare that the paper has not been previously published, it is not currently submitted for reviews to any other journal/magazine or periodicals, and it will not be submitted elsewhere.

- Balakrishnan, Vishalache & Darcia Narvaez. (2016). "A Reconceptualisation of Vygotsky's ZPD into ZCD in Teaching Moral Education in Secondary Schools Using Real-Life Dilemmas" in *Journal of Cogent Education*, Volume 3, Issue 1. Available online also at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1142925> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Balakrishnan, Vishalache & Lise Claiborne. (2017). "Participatory Action Research in Culturally Complex Societies: Opportunities and Challenges" in *ERIC: Educational Action Research*, Vol.25, No.2, pp.185-202. Available online also at: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1132214> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Bambaeeroo, F. & N. Shokerpour. (2017). "The Impact of the Teachers' Non-Verbal Communication on Success in Teaching" in *JAMEP: Journal of Advance in Medical Education and Professionalism*, Volume 5(2), April, pp.51-59. Available online also at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5346168/> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Banks, J.A. (2006). *Cultural Diversity and Education*. Boston: Pearson Education, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.
- Bearfield, D.A. & W.S. Eller. (2007). "Writing a Literature Review: The Art of Scientific Literature" in K. Yang & G.J. Miller. [eds]. *Handbook of Research Methods for Public Administration*. New York: CRC Press, Taylor & Francis, pp.61-72.
- Begley, Ann M. (2006). "Facilitating the Development of Moral Insight in Practice: Teaching Ethics and Teaching Virtue" in *Nursing Philosophy*, Volume 7, Issue 4 [October], pp.257-265. Available online also at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-769X.2006.00284.x> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Benjamin-Thomas, T.E. et al. (2018). "Working towards the Promise of Participatory Action Research: Learning from Ageing Research Exemplars" in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, on December. Available online also at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1609406918817953> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: January 13, 2019].
- Bloch, D. (1993). *Positive Self-Talk for Children, Teaching Self-Esteem through Affirmations: A Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Counselors*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Brun, Christa De. (2016). "Teaching for Thinking: An Action Research Inquiry into the Pedagogical Potential of Modern Literature to Foster Critical Thinking and Facilitate Critical Consciousness in Third Level Students". *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*. Maynooth: Department of Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Ireland. Available online also at: <http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/7558/1/Doctoral%20Thesis%20Final%20Document.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Burgess, J. (1995). "Making Clients or Regenerating Citizens: A Feminist Analysis of Community Work". *Unpublished Master's Thesis*. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: University of Victoria.
- Burgess, Judy. (2006). "Participatory Action Research: First-Person Perspectives of a Graduate Student" in *AR: Action Research*, Volume 4(4), pp.419-437. Available online also at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4f89/13b797ad262014c4d315cdf76foe4719c32f.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Burns, Anne. (2010). *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners*. New York and London: Routledge. Available online also at: <http://englishlangkan.com/produk/E%20Book%20Doing%20Action%20Research> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Buzza, Dawn et al. (2013). "Exploring the Relationship between Self-Regulated Learning and Reflection in Teacher Education". Available online at: <file:///C:/Users/Downloads/3578-Article%20Text-8713-3-10-20130419.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Capra, F. (2002). *The Hidden Connections: Integrating the Hidden Connections among the Biological, Cognitive, and Social Dimensions of Life*. New York: Doubleday Press.
- Chevalier, J.M. & D.J. Buckles. (2013). *Participatory Action Research: Theory and Methods for Engaged Inquiry*. UK [United Kingdom]: Routledge.
- Christensen, David S. & Robin Boneck. (2010). "Four Questions for Analyzing the Right Versus-Right Dilemmas of Managers" in *Journal of Business Case Studies*, Vol.6, No.3 [May/June], pp.53-58.
- Cottone, R.R. (2001). "A Social Constructivism Model of Ethical Decision: Real Life Ethical Decisions are Studied in Sociology and Political Science and Psychology Using Very Different Methods than Descriptive Ethics in Ethics (Philosophy), Not Ethics Proper Making in Counselling" in *Journal of Counselling and Development*, Volume 79, pp.39-45.
- Darling-Hammond, Linda et al. (2019). "Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development" in *Journal of Applied Developmental Science*, Volume 24, Issue 2, pp.97-140. Available online also at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: April 21, 2019].
- Davey, C., T. Burke & C. Shaw. (2017). "Children's Participation in Decision-Making: A Children's Views Report". Available online at: [http://www.crae.org.uk/media/26282/Childrens\\_participation\\_in\\_decision-making\\_-\\_A\\_childrens\\_views\\_report.pdf](http://www.crae.org.uk/media/26282/Childrens_participation_in_decision-making_-_A_childrens_views_report.pdf) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 31, 2018].
- DiPietro, Michael. (2018). "Harkness and Action Research: Activity and Affect". *Unpublished M.A. Thesis*. Vancouver: The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in Science Education, the University of British Columbia. Available online also at: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0378390> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: January 10, 2019].
- Dillenbourg, P. et al. (1996). "The Evolution of Research on Collaborative Learning" in E. Spada & P. Reiman [eds]. *Learning in Humans and Machine: Towards an Interdisciplinary Learning Science*. Oxford: Elsevier, pp.189-211.
- Fink, A. (2005). *Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

- Franco, Maria Amelia Santoro. (2005). "The Pedagogy of Action Research" in *Educacao e Pesquisa*, Vol.31, No.3 [September-December]. Available online also at: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1517-97022005000300011> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Fry, Heather, Steve Ketteridge & Stephanie Marshall [eds]. (2009). *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Academic Practice*. New York and London: Routledge, third edition. Available online also at: <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/arts/Documents/HandbookTeachingLearningHigheEd.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Gablinske, Patricia Brady. (2014). "A Case Study of Student and Teacher Relationships and the Effect on Student Learning". *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*. Rhode Island: Rhode Island College, University Of Rhode Island. Available online also at: [https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1284&context=oa\\_diss](https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1284&context=oa_diss) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Garcia, R.L. (1991). *Teaching in a Pluralistic Society: Concepts, Models, and Strategies*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Gaventa, J. (1991). "Toward a Knowledge Democracy: Viewpoints on Participatory Action-Research in North America" in R. Fals-Borda & M.A. Rahman [eds]. *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action-Research*. New York: The Apex Press, pp.121-131.
- Gibbon, M. (2002). "Doing a Doctorate Using a Participatory Action Research Framework in the Context of Community Health" in *Qualitative Health Research*, Volume 12(4), April, pp.546-558. Available online also at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11939253> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Gilligan, Carol & Jessica Eddy. (2017). "Listening as a Path to Psychological Discovery: An Introduction to the Listening Guide" in *Perspectives on Medical Education*, Volume 6, pp.76-81. Available online also at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40037-017-0335-3> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Greene, Deborah A. (2014). "An Alternative to the Alternatives: Considering a Progressive Possibility for Alternative Schools". *Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation*. Greensboro: Faculty of the Graduate School, the University of North Carolina. Available online also at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4233/22d2df616b6efca3f95818c120b59d896416.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Grunig, James E. (2014). "Ethics Problems and Theories in Public Relations" in *COMMUNIQUER: Revue de Communication Sociale et Publique*, Volume 11, pp.1-14. Available online also at: <https://journals.openedition.org/communiquer/559?gathStatIcon=true&lang=en> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Gulati, Sushma & Daya Pant. (2017). *Education for Values in Schools: A Framework*. New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations of Education.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2, Life World and System: A Critique of Functionist Reason*. Cambridge: Polity, translated by T. McCarthy.
- Habermas, J. (1994). *The Past as Future: Interviews by M. Haller*. Cambridge: Polity, translated by M. Pensky.
- Hammond, Michael. (2017). "Online Collaboration and Cooperation: The Recurring Importance of Evidence, Rationale, and Viability" in *Education and Information Technologies*, Volume 22, pp.1005-1024. Available online also at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10639-016-9469-x> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Heen, H. (2005). "About Feelings in Action Research" in *Action Research*, Volume 3(3), pp.263-278.
- Hendrickson, Katie A. (2010). "Student Perceptions of School: Resistance in Rural Appalachia". *Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis*. Ohio: Department of Educational Studies, College of Education, Ohio State University. Available online also at: [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd\\_send\\_file?accession=ohiou1275443264&disposition=inline](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd_send_file?accession=ohiou1275443264&disposition=inline) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Hilliker, Erica. (2018). "Essential Student Collaboration Strategies for Diverse Classrooms" in *TCH: Teaching Channel*, on May 16. Available online also at: <https://www.teachingchannel.com/blog/surviving-group-work> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: January 2, 2019].
- Holmes, David. (2013). "Idioms and Expressions: A Method for Learning and Remembering Idioms and Expressions". Available online at: <https://www.pimacountyfair.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Idioms-and-Expressions.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Houtum, Henk van, Olivier Kramersch & Wolfgang Zierhofer [eds]. (2013). *B/ordering Space*. Wolfgang, Netherlands: Zierhofer, firstly published in 2005. Available online also at: <https://henkvanhoutum.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/borderingspace.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Hult, M. & S. Lennung. (1980). "Towards a Definition of Action-Research: A Note and a Bibliography" in *Journal of Management Studies*, Volume 17(2), pp.241-250.
- Incerti-Thery, Irene. (2016). "Dialogue as a Tool in Peacebuilding: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives". *Unpublished Master's Thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation*. Norway: Centre for Peace Studies in the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education UiT [the Arctic University of Norway]. Available online also at: <https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/9852/thesis.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Kannegieter, T.H. (2010). "Boundary Weaving: The Social Structure and Processes of Organizational Boundaries". *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*. Australia: Faculty of Science and Technology, Queensland



- University of Technology. Available online also at: [https://eprints.qut.edu.au/46613/1/Timothy\\_Kannegieter\\_Thesis.pdf](https://eprints.qut.edu.au/46613/1/Timothy_Kannegieter_Thesis.pdf) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Karimi-Aghdam, Saeed. (2017). "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as an Emergent System: A Dynamic Systems Theory Perspective" in *Integr Psych Behav*, Volume 51, pp.76-93. Available online also at: <http://lchc.ucsd.edu/MCA/Mail/xmcamail.2017-03.dir/pdf/DNfbpZUOXF.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 31, 2018].
- Kellner, Douglas. (2014). "Habermas, the Public Sphere, and Democracy: A Critical Intervention". Available online at: <https://pages.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/papers/habermas.htm> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Kemmis, S. (2001). "Exploring the Relevance of Critical Theory for Action Research: Emancipatory Action Research in the Footsteps of Jurgen Habermas" in P. Reason & H. Bradbury [eds]. *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage, pp.91-102.
- Kemmis, S. & R. McTaggart. (1998). *The Action Research Planner*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.
- Khan, Candy & Donna M. Chovanec. (2010). "Is Participatory Action Research Relevant in the Canadian Workplace?" in *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, Volume 5(1), pp.34-44.
- Koch, T. et al. (2005). "Focus Reflection: Look, Think, and Act Cycles in Participatory Action Research" in *Journal of Research in Nursing*, Volume 10(3), pp.261-267.
- Kolzow, David R. (2014). "Leading from Within: Building Organizational Leadership Capacity". Available online at: [https://www.iedonline.org/clientuploads/Downloads/edrp/Leading\\_from\\_Within.pdf](https://www.iedonline.org/clientuploads/Downloads/edrp/Leading_from_Within.pdf) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Kuumba, B. & F. Ajanaku. (1996). "Women's Liberation Research: Methodological Strategies for Social Change and Empowerment" in *Advances in Gender Research*, Volume 1, pp.189-212.
- Leary, Mark R. (2015). "Emotional Responses to Interpersonal Rejection" in *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, Volume 17(4), December, pp.435-441. Available online also at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4734881/> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Lewin, M. & D. Greenwood. (2001). "Pragmatic Action Research and the Struggle to Transform Universities into Learning Communities" in P. Reason & H. Bradbury [eds]. *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage, pp.103-113.
- Lodico, M.G., D.T. Spaulding & K.H. Voegtler. (2006). *Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- MacDonald, Cathy. (2012). "Understanding Participatory Action Research: A Qualitative Research Methodology Option" in *CJAR: Canadian Journal of Action Research*, Volume 13, Issue 2, pp.34-50. Available online also at: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3b78/ecfe0b4a0a7591d2ea068c71e8ea320ff451.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Mahmood, Haniza. (2014). "Civics and Citizenship Education in Malaysia : The Voice of Micro Policy Enactors". *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*. UK [United Kingdom]: School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University. Available online also at: <https://orca.cf.ac.uk/69576/1/Final%20Version%20Thesis%20Haniza%20Mahmood%20-ORCA.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 10, 2018].
- Mansfield, C.F. & A. Woods-McConney. (2012). "I Didn't Always Perceive Myself as a Science Person: Examining Efficacy for Primary Science Teaching" in *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, Volume 37(10). Available online also at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n10.5> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- McKay, R. & H. Whitehouse. (2015). "Religion and Morality" in *Psychological Bulletin*, Volume 141(2), December, pp.447-373. Available online also at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4345965/> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- McKnight, J. (1987). "Regenerating Community" in *Social Policy*, Winter, pp.54-58.
- McNiff, J. (1988). *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- McTaggart, R. (1997). *Participatory Action Research: International Contexts and Consequences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Miall, Hugh. (2004). "Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task". Available online at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/71735641.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Morales, M.P.E. (2016). "Participatory Action Research (PAR) cum Action Research (AR) in Teacher Professional Development: A Literature Review" in *IJRES: International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, Volume 2(1), pp.156-165. Available online also at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1105165.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Murrell, P.C. (2007). *Race, Culture, and Schooling*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Narinasamy, Ilhavenil. (2013). "Teacher as a Caring Agent in Developing Empathy among Moral Education Students". *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*. Kuala Lumpur: Faculty of Education, University of Malaya. Available online also at: [http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/5550/1/Phd\\_Thesis\\_-\\_pdf.pdf](http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/5550/1/Phd_Thesis_-_pdf.pdf) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Noddings, N. (1997). "Must We Motivate?" in N.C. Burbules & D.T. Hansen [eds]. *Teaching and its Predicaments*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp.29-44.
- Nombre, Apellidos Y. (2015). "The Importance of Teaching Listening and Speaking Skills". Available online at: <https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/119-2015-03-17-12.RocioSeguraAlonso2013.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Ozer, E.J., M.L. Ritterman & M.G. Wanis. (2010). "Participatory Action Research (PAR) in Middle School: Opportunities, Constraints, and Key Processes" in *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Volume 46(1-2), September, pp.152-166. Available online also at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2911111/>



- [gov/pmc/articles/PMC2921496/](http://gov/pmc/articles/PMC2921496/) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 31, 2018].
- Pettit, Jethro. (2010). "Learning to Do Action Research for Social Change" in *International Journal of Communication*, Volume 4, pp.820-827. Available online also at: <https://www.participatorymethods.org/sites/participatorymethods.org/files/Learning> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Pfeiffer, J. William. (1998). "Conditions that Hinder Effective Communication" in John E. Jones & J. William Pfeiffer [eds]. *Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company, originally published in 1973. Available online also at: <http://home.snu.edu/~jsmith/library/body/v06.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Pogosyan, M. & J.B. Engelmann. (2017). "How We Read Emotions from Faces" in *Frontiers for Young Minds*, on April 24. Available online also at: <https://kids.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/frym.2017.00011> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Power, C.F., A. Higgins & L. Kohlberg. (1989). *Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Reason, P. & H. Bradbury. (2001). "Introduction: Inquiry and Participation in Search of World Worthy of Human Aspiration" in P. Reason & H. Bradbury [eds]. *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage, pp.1-14.
- Reilly, Anthony J. (1998). "Three Approaches to Organizational Learning" in John E. Jones & J. William Pfeiffer [eds]. *Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators*. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Company, firstly published in 1973. Available online also at: <http://home.snu.edu/~jsmith/library/body/v16.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Ryan, Thomas G. (2001). "The Role of Leadership in Action Research" in *NETWORKS: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*, Volume 4(1). Available online also at: <http://journals.sfu.ca/uwmadison/index.php/networks/article/view/145/144> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 24, 2018].
- Ryan, Thomas G. (2014). "Communicative Elements of Action Research" in *NETWORKS: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*, Volume 15, Issue 2. Available online also at: <https://doi.org/10.4148/2470-6353.1056> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 31, 2018].
- Ryan, Kevin. (2017). "Moral Education: A Brief History of Moral Education, the Return of Character Education, Current Approaches to Moral Education". Available online at: <https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2246/Moral-Education.html> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 17, 2018].
- Shabani, Karim. (2016). "Applications of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Approach for Teachers' Professional Development" in *Journal of Cogent Education*, Volume 3, Issue 1 [November]. Available online also at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1252177> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 31, 2018].
- Shapira-Lishchinsky, Orly. (2010). "Teachers' Critical Incidents: Ethical Dilemmas in Teaching Practice" in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Volume XXX, pp.1-9. Available online also at: [https://education.biu.ac.il/sites/education/files/shared/TAT\\_16\\_DEC\\_2010.pdf](https://education.biu.ac.il/sites/education/files/shared/TAT_16_DEC_2010.pdf) [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 17, 2018].
- Shapiro, L.E. (2008). *Learning to Listen, Learning to Care*. Oakland, CA: Instant Help Book.
- Shukie, Peter. (2017). "A Participatory Action Research Investigation into an Open, Online Community Project Exploring How Teaching and Learning Occur in a Non-Institutional, Non-Specialist, Technology Enhanced Learning Environment". *Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis*. UK [United Kingdom]: Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University. Available online also at: <https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/id/eprint/125042/1/2018shukiephd.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 17, 2018].
- Taylor, M.J. (1996). "Voicing Their Values: Pupils' Moral and Cultural Experience" in J.M. Halstead & M.J. Taylors [eds]. *Values in Education and Education in Values*. London: The Falmer Press, pp.121-142.
- Tetui, Moses. (2017). "Experiences of Using a Participatory Action Research Approach to Strengthen District Local Capacity in Eastern Uganda" in *Global Health Action*, Vol.10, Supp.4 [August]. Available online also at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5645723/> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 3, 2018].
- Timperley, Helen et al. (2017). "Teacher Professional Learning and Development: Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration [BES]". Available online at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/48727127.pdf> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 17, 2018].
- Tummers, L.G. & N. Karsten. (2012). "Reflecting on the Role of Literature in Qualitative Public Administration Research: Learning from Grounded Theory" in *Administration and Society*, Volume 44(1), pp.64-86.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wadsworth, Y. (1998). "What is Participatory Action Research?". Available online at: <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: July 15, 2018].
- Wallerstein, N. & B. Duran. (2003). "The Conceptual, Historical, and Practice Roots of Community Based Participatory Research and Related Participatory Traditions" in M. Minkler & N. Wallerstein [eds]. *Community Based Participatory Research for Health*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp.53-76.
- Whitehead, J. (2005). "Creating Educational Theories from Educational Enquiries of the Kind, 'How Do I Improve my Educational Influence?' A Response to Gorard and Nash". A Paper submitted to *The Journal of Educational Enquiry*. Available and owned by the Author.
- Wigham, Ciara R. (2012). "The Interplay between Non-Verbal and Verbal Interaction in Synthetic Worlds which Supports Verbal Participation and Production in a Foreign Language". *Unpublished Doctoral Thesis*. France: Ecole Doctorale Lettres, Sciences Humaines et Sociales, Université Blaise Pascal. Available online also at: <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00762382v2/document> [accessed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: August 31, 2018].



### **The Young People of Malaysia**

(Source: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com>, 31/8/2018)

The need for a holistic education, where young people are taught to enable themselves to balance the different aspects of life, is becoming a popular phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, charting their future without allowing space for adolescents to voice their opinions, their needs, and their disagreements through mutual respect and dignity is sadly still lacking in the current digital era. This article aims to capture the lives of adolescents in such a situation and provide the alternative avenue of listening to the “oppressed”. It is proposed that adolescence, who are empowered, tend to have a better control of their daily life conflicts when they become adults. Including adolescents as researchers in action research, such as participatory action research, enables them to understand their role in a wider spectrum and a space to grow and develop.