**Interview Transcript: A Teacher’s Observations of Child Oppression**

An interview was conducted with “Ms. D,” a female, fifth grade, veteran elementary school classroom teacher in preparation for an action research project on school bullying. The research team interviewed fourth and fifth grade teachers at a lower middle-class suburban school site to learn about forms of oppression they saw and heard most often among their children.

As a coding and analysis exercise, review the transcript excerpt several times to become acquainted with the contents. Make jottings about passages that strike you and pre-code your initial work. Then, separate the interview transcript into stanzas. Determine the most appropriate coding method(s) for the transcript to help examine the pre-action research question:

* What are the forms of child oppression?

Also compose an analytic memo that brainstorms the types of strategies that might be taken by an action research team to lessen the amount of child oppression in a school setting.

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I: How do children in your classroom oppress each other?

MS. D: Well, they call each other names.

I: Like, what kinds of names?

MS. D: Oh, we’ve got a little girl in here, she looks different and she acts different, so they’ll make up some name that they call her. They, um, it’s the same kid, it seems like every year there’s one kid that gets picked on more than somebody else, because they’re different, because they might look different, they might act different. Say, for instance, she will say something or she gets very excited about something, they’ll tell her to “Sit down,” “Be quiet,” “Stop doing this,” they’re like on her case all the time. Then you’ve got another kid in here who, well he loses control of himself, and so he blurts stuff out or yells out, and the kids will turn around and yell back at him. And out on the playground they do tend to sometimes get pushy-shovy kinda stuff. Like with her *[pointing to a desk]* I’ve watched them actually walk by this little girl and purposely bump into her or something like that, but then even though you’re watching them, the kid’ll turn around and say, “Well, I didn’t do that” after you confront him. And it’s not everybody, it’s just a few, and it’s a few that have behavior problems that seek attention, and they don’t know how to get attention any other way besides a negative way.

I: How do the students deal with these conflicts?

MS. D: They come to me right away to tell me, so then I have to deal with it. I’ve told them to do it that way. I don’t want them taking means into their own hands, ‘cause if they do then they’re causing more problems than, because they tend to get physical or it’s a taunting kind of thing that will take place all over the place. So if they come to me right away then I can deal with just the two people it involves and that way it doesn’t tend to get blown out of proportion. It stays right there rather than getting other kids involved in the situation.

I: What kinds of oppressions might your students deal with in their home environment?

MS. D: Oh, jeez. There’s some sad cases here. There’s this one boy who seeks attention because his mother is a drunken alcoholic. The mom says he’s his best buddy and works hard to get him what he wants. He’s had to meet with the school counselor. There was another girl who was taken away from a bad family situation in Philadelphia because of physical and verbal abuse, her mother was into witchcraft. She moved to live with some relatives here but the home situation here isn’t safe either, so the police had to be called in. But she seems to be settling in now. Her mom’s moved down here but the girl’s slowly evolving into one of the neighborhood kids. She’s the one they pick on a lot because she *is* a little different, but she’s had different experiences than a lot of kids, too.

I: What kinds of differences do kids tend to target?

MS. D: With this one student the kids seem to zero in because she did look different, and she . . .

I: Clothing-wise?

MS. D: No, just physically, she, she just, and she acted kind of strange, she would just rock back and forth in her chair, that this was a thing of the abuse, that kind of thing. And one of the girls said, “Stop it, stop it!” and I would have to go over to her and just put my hands on her, “Don’t do that now,” that kind of thing, and we had to have her meet with the school nurse. And she’s the type of kid who thinks she knows everything, so that was another thing that bugged the kids, that she would, and yet she *does* know a lot, but they just didn’t like it, that it was *her*. You know, once they had this idea that something’s wrong with them, or they don’t like them, then when they start to interact with the kids and the kids kind of, they’re not accepting. But most of the other kids in this room have been together for years, so she’s brand new, the other kid with problems is brand new, and so it’s the ones, they’re kind of not fitting in because they weren’t with this group as they moved on through school.

I: Like a newcomer?

MS. D: Uh-huh, I think it *is* like a newcomer thing. It’s basically the new ones. These two new ones were pretty outgoing and were put down by the others, but another newcomer moved quietly and she was easily accepted because she didn’t stand out. There’s another boy who’s obnoxious and the class gets upset with him. The kids pick up on attitude. Their whole thing is attention: how can I get attention and bring it to myself? Acting goofy or silly is a big thing, and some of the kids’ll say, “Oh, stop acting like that.”