

Transcript of Teacher Interview English Version

Transcript of Teacher Interview – Meeting with Orestis Bollano – 29 October 2025, 18:42 – Duration 35:43.

0:03 – ATHINA NASSAR: I'll answer you as if I'm talking about last year when I was working.

0:03 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: That's fine, no problem.

0:10 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Great, so to start and for the recording: we're a team of students interested in building an AI model that helps with teaching. We want to look at both sides, how it can support teachers in their work and how it can support children when the teacher is very busy or has other obligations. Before we get there, tell me a bit about yourself: what do you teach and what's your experience?

1:10 – ATHINA NASSAR: My first degree is in early childhood education, and now I also work as a psychotherapist, which is what my master's is in, and I've worked for 7 years in private schools up to last year.

1:38 – ATHINA NASSAR: The first two years I was with pre-kindergarteners, and the last five years in a kindergarten class.

1:51 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Nice. What led you to become a kindergarten teacher? Did you consider primary school or something else?

2:09 – ATHINA NASSAR: At 18, it wasn't a particularly conscious decision; I went with what I felt fit me and what others said, and over time, working with children, I realized it truly makes me happy. It's unique to work with children, and it helps you psychologically, because you're not "allowed" to go to school steeped in gloom, just that by itself lifts you up, even if at first it feels forced. I like helping people take their first steps, so that they might learn something for the first time from me, and that some of it will stick with them.

3:33 – ATHINA NASSAR: That satisfies me tremendously.

3:37 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: So the particularly rewarding part is giving those first steps at such a tender age and guiding them toward primary school and their daily life.

4:07 – ATHINA NASSAR: All grades are important, but in kindergarten, we mainly work on social skills, not "content" and strict instructional material. For me, if I can lay even a small foundation so a child doesn't become, say, racist, and if I've given them something substantial, that's unique, because it's the start of a better world.

4:52 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Very nice perspective, even if it sounds like a cliché, and we rarely encounter it later in daily life as we get caught up in our problems. What did a typical week look like at the school where you worked?

5:36 – ATHINA NASSAR: In the school where I spent most years, there was quite a "strict" program: we didn't stray far from what was planned, and there was emphasis on "getting through" the program. Over the week, we had to implement activities in all areas: language, math, arts, theater; no week should pass without covering them.

6:00 – ATHINA NASSAR: I planned them in detail over the weekend; they had to be done, no matter what. We started in the morning with a gentle start and then did 1–3 activities back to

back.

6:57 – ATHINA NASSAR: In my opinion, this didn't always lead to real learning, but we did it so we could say "we did them" and have photographic documentation of what's happening.

7:16 – ATHINA NASSAR: There were 22 children, and I was alone, so I couldn't attend to each child as I wanted nor observe them as much as I'd like.

7:39 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: It seems the program didn't suit you. If you had the freedom to design it, what changes would you make and why?

8:14 – ATHINA NASSAR: I'd remove the intense "preparation for primary school", basically, I'd remove it entirely. From Easter onward, we had reached the point of them reading and practically doing first-grade exercises, which to me is unreasonable for kindergarteners. I'd focus far more on play and social skills and very little on the "academic" piece, because there are many years for that later.

9:12 – ATHINA NASSAR: I'd make the program freer, and I would definitely get the children out of the little chairs; you can't expect five-year-olds to sit constantly. The fact that I had to keep them seated made me feel like a teacher I don't want to be.

9:51 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Do you remember an incident with a child who reacted to the rules and how you handled it?

10:12 – ATHINA NASSAR: Yes, a child who had lived in Scandinavia (Denmark), where they were outside all day in forests/mountains and had lessons outdoors, came to us at 4 years old, and the shock was huge. At recess, when I said we needed to go back inside, he would drop to his knees and sob, "I can't stand it, why so little," and inside the class, he couldn't sit; he kept running.

11:32 – ATHINA NASSAR: I had to adapt it to the Greek context, without wanting to "cut off" what he had experienced, and it was difficult. I gave him more opportunities to move: small "missions," to go bring things, to stand up, so he could release energy, with extra understanding.

12:23 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Makes sense, they need an outlet at that age. How did the other children perceive the additional attention to him?

13:03 – ATHINA NASSAR: I didn't give him special attention at the expense of the others, but because he was younger, he more often sought support; however, I was alone, and I couldn't give more than what was feasible.

13:34 – ATHINA NASSAR: With 22 children, it's hard to give "more" attention so conspicuously that the others would get jealous or feel bad.

13:46 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: In general, is more attention needed inside the classroom, or is it something that should happen at home with parents as well?

14:21 – ATHINA NASSAR: Without school-home collaboration, you don't get the needed outcome, because those are the two basic social learning contexts. We spoke with the parents, found practical tips for home and school, and the child also had a newborn sibling, so he was experiencing many things at once.

15:26 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: You're alone in a class with 22 hyperactive little humans; how do you balance that, and what role does technology actually play?

16:24 – ATHINA NASSAR: I tried to give equal attention, but honestly, I didn't manage it as

much as I wanted, and that was a reason I decided to leave, because I had become a teacher I didn't like.

16:48 — ATHINA NASSAR: In recent years, the number of children with special needs has increased; there was no parallel support, so I stopped the “sterile implementation” of the program and did things that all could participate in. I tried to find the “middle” so that both the more advanced and the less advanced academically could work together, with a lower coordination load for me.

18:32 — ATHINA NASSAR: Otherwise, an activity could easily lead to “accidents” in class—so the program had to be adapted to be safe and functional.

18:44 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: In the private school, was there investment in screens/interactive whiteboards for interactivity?

19:23 — ATHINA NASSAR: There was a once-a-week Informatics class in a room with an interactive whiteboard, so that lesson always happened there. If I wanted something outside of that, a time/room had to be found, which wasn't easy.

20:15 — ATHINA NASSAR: Sometimes I found interesting material for a theme and wanted to show it, but beyond that one scheduled hour, it wasn't always feasible.

20:22 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: If you had access to such a room more often, would it help you?

20:39 — ATHINA NASSAR: Certainly today, because many more programs have been released in recent years; even then, it would have helped, but options were more limited.

21:17 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Would usage today be for weekly preparation or for interactive content? Have you used it, and how did it help or would it help you ?

21:55 — ATHINA NASSAR: I've used it and it helps a lot with preparation: if you give it a picture of the class dynamics and your approach, it can bring many ideas quickly and save you time. It often gave me consolidated, usable ideas.

22:52 — ATHINA NASSAR: But I also have reservations, there are “bad” along with the “good”.

23:27 — ATHINA NASSAR: I feel personal effort is lost; for example, asking a chat to write wishes in a card isn't the same as writing them yourself. AI aggregates existing information, but it doesn't have your unique imagination and your class's stimuli.

24:45 — ATHINA NASSAR: In the end, AI is made by the human mind; it's a pity for our own mind to be “pulped” and to take everything ready-made.

24:59 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Children today are growing up with AI available; did you hear of children/parents using it or any related references?

26:16 — ATHINA NASSAR: Not particularly; there was a child whose father (an academic) gave us a seminar and said that in a few years, a large part of schools will operate with AI.

26:42 — ATHINA NASSAR: In general, I saw impressive familiarity with technology: children aged 3–4 with a phone, YouTube, Spotify, and they often mentioned technology when we asked about their weekend.

27:31 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: How do you feel about extensive use of AI in schools, both from the teacher's side and the children's side?

27:58 — ATHINA NASSAR: It scares me that limits aren't being set; I watch a video and wonder if it's real—abuse of technology and a blurred reality.

28:22 — ATHINA NASSAR: Education is quintessentially human-centered and interpersonal; I

fear that without limits, AI will stand opposite us instead of helping us.

29:03 — ATHINA NASSAR: History may later show it didn't do well, because we don't set limits on how it's used.

29:14 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: If you had a "helper" in class that you fully control, what would you assign it to do to help during class time?

29:56 — ATHINA NASSAR: I'd use it to make education a bit more individualized: to engage creatively those who "get it," so I can go closer to the 2–3 children who need support, not to put the rest on "autopilot".

30:58 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Would it help to have the same helper at home (with parental consent) for absences or difficulties, or only in class?

31:54 — ATHINA NASSAR: I'm torn; as "society moves forward," artificial needs are created, for example, I tutor primary school children without special difficulties simply because "that's the regime now" and they don't study on their own. On one hand, yes, since there's a need, let there also be an AI "guide" at home; on the other hand, we reach zero where we do nothing by ourselves.

33:12 — ATHINA NASSAR: I don't want everything to be mediated, yes and no, with moderation and clear limits.

33:28 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: In closing, if we build this, would you use it, and what safety measures would you want?

34:02 — ATHINA NASSAR: Yes, but definitely with supervision; there must always be a teacher in the room so the interpersonal element and the human factor aren't lost. Technology is smart, but it isn't a human; maybe one day we'll talk about "emotional intelligence," but I don't want to live that, so supervision and emphasis on the human.

35:28 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Thank you very much, hope you didn't feel uncomfortable.

35:32 — ATHINA NASSAR: Thank you, not at all.

35:38 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: I'm stopping the recording.