

Transcript of Teacher Interview English Version

Transcript of Teacher Interview — Meeting with Orestis Bollano — 29 October 2025, 09:11 — Duration 34:33.

0:05 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Yes, will I be heard?

0:05 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Now we've got it.

0:09 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: That's it.

0:13 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Good morning, good morning, Maria.

0:16 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Good morning.

0:18 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: So, I'll ask you a few questions. We are a team working on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in general, and we want to see if we can build a model to help teachers incorporate AI into teaching children.

0:19 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Okay.

0:47 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: To break the ice a bit and for the record, tell me a few things about yourself, how long you've been teaching, and related details.

1:02 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: So, I'm Maria. I've been a kindergarten teacher since I finished university, and I've worked in the public sector for a total of 3 years. As a general education kindergarten teacher, I've also worked in a private nursery with younger ages. In kindergarten, the classes are usually mixed 4- and 5-year-olds, that is, pre-K and K together. Yes, that's it.

1:48 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Great. How did you choose to become a kindergarten teacher—what drew you to teaching?

1:57 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I liked that it's not an 8-hour job but fewer hours, essentially 5 hours a day—and the vacations also play a role. Mainly, though, I liked the freedom and creativity, because in kindergarten, there isn't a strict curriculum like in primary or middle school, and you aren't chased by time. You do the basics (e.g., colors), but in the way and at the time that suits the class, using creative methods, crafts, experiments, and nice activities, and the time passes pleasantly.

2:57 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: You mentioned creativity. What would you say is the key element that makes your class creative, and how do you convey that to the children?

3:13 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I try, precisely because there isn't a strict program, to make everything as playful as possible and to learn through crafts and experiments. That way it's more enjoyable for the children and for me.

3:41 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Would you like to describe a typical week, especially the initial introductory weeks?

3:55 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: In the first weeks, we try to integrate the children into the school setting, especially those coming for the first time. We do get-to-know-you activities and explore the classroom spaces/corners and the toys, so they get into the routine with something easy, like colors. We start with circle time, do activities, split into groups, and work on individual or group tasks.

4:40 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: That's what a simple week looks like.

4:56 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: You mentioned things children usually know or learn easily, like colors. From your experience, what do you see them struggling with the most?

4:59 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: At school in general?

5:31 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: The main thing is concentration, especially sitting down and focusing. Last year, I had a child who, even though we discussed it with the parents, couldn't concentrate on a video, a storybook, or the discussion.

6:06 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: At these ages, they can't concentrate for long, which is why we do very short structured activities, about 10 minutes, and then move on to free play, drawing, etc. That's usually the issue.

6:24 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: How many hours does class last, what are the periods called, and what's the situation with breaks?

6:41 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: It depends on the school and is adapted, for example, in winter we might have an earlier recess due to the weather. The children arrive 8:15–8:30, the door closes at 8:30, and they are dismissed at 13:00, with a break of about 45 minutes that includes time for food of around 30–40 minutes. They may also have English for around 40–45 minutes. There's a structured plan (e.g., 8:30–9:30 free play), but I adjust it. For example, when they arrive well-rested, I do a structured activity first and leave free play for later. Generally, about three structured activities, food, recess, and play are planned, but it isn't rigid.

7:57 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: When the children come in the morning, if you do more "fun" activities, do they respond better? Do you see a different reaction as the day goes on and they get tired?

8:28 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: After recess, they have a lot of energy from running and playing, they're sweaty and thirsty, and it's hard to do a structured activity right away. I usually let them play freely at the centers to calm down, and the last hour (12:00–13:00) is the most challenging due to fatigue.

9:08 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: In which areas do they need more help/guidance from you, and what should parents pay attention to at home?

9:45 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: They need help with concentration and a lot with cooperation because many children are only children and suddenly find themselves in a group of 20. I advise parents to socialize outside of school (e.g., at the playground), to learn to collaborate, and for concentration to read storybooks together and asking questions. Children with pronounced difficulty may not focus even on videos or reading without guidance.

10:49 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I told one mom to sit together, watch a short video, or read a story, and see whether the child follows or zones out and doesn't participate.

11:03 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: With heavy tech use, I've noticed my own concentration worsening over time as well.

11:30 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I think it happens to all of us.

11:34 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: With the Internet today and the issue of socialization, especially for such young children, what do you observe in those who use technology from an early age compared to those who don't?

12:14 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Even though they're young, many children aged 4–5 have a tablet or watch on a parent's phone and are very familiar with it.

12:31 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I notice they get bored very easily and prefer to watch a story as a video rather than read it together. They get excited when I turn on the projector more than with a book or notes because of the rapid image changes, but that undermines their patience for slower activities, like off-screen puzzles.

13:24 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: From time to time, I try to bring in the computer/projector to keep their interest, although we don't always have the equipment I'd like. I'd like there to be a kind of "break" with something technological when needed.

13:47 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: In Greek kindergartens, there is no informatics class, but since the children are so familiar, there could be an hour on proper use instead of just consuming YouTube at home.

14:05 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I've also noticed a bit more aggressiveness, more often in boys, probably from the content they watch.

14:23 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I had a child who at recess "played" a scene from Squid Game—pretending to be on "lookout" by the wall and then chasing/hitting other children, which is shocking for that age.

14:51 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Yes, it is indeed strange, especially if they've seen the series at home.

15:05 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: So, you're in favor of bringing technology into school with control and supervision from teachers?

15:41 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Yes.

15:46 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: What would you like a class to have additionally in terms of equipment or support, beyond the tablets you mentioned?

16:17 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I'd like every school to at least have a projector, because during my first year without one, I had to turn the computer screen toward 20 children, which was difficult. With a projector, even during lunch, I put on calm music/videos to help them settle, and it helped a lot. Tablets would help with group work, as long as they're configured only with specific activities.

17:22 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I'd like the children to handle something themselves (not only watch), e.g., a computer or tablet with simple activities.

17:42 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: We're trying to integrate AI as a "helper" in the classroom, like a second teacher, to assist on busy days or with organizing events. How would such a helper support you in daily life?

19:01 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I'd like it to quickly suggest ideas/activities when something unexpected comes up and I need to change plans (e.g., snow, a few children present, a specific theme, specific ages). It would greatly help with organization (field trips, events, parent appointments) through automatic forms/scheduling, something we had last year, and it worked well.

20:43 — ORESTIS BOLLANO: Have you generally used chat/AI tools at home or at work?

20:56 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Yes, a lot in my master's for assignments, and at school to create activities and poems for a celebration. I had three children who spoke other languages, and I wanted very simple, short, and fair parts so they could participate equally.

21:43 — MARIA ELEFThERIADI: For example, for 28 October, I asked for many short poems and

ideas for activities and for the daily schedule.

21:56 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Do you take them “as is” or use them as ideas you adapt?

22:32 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Because in Greek they’re not as advanced, I usually use them as ideas/a rough template, and with small, quick changes, I adapt them to what I have in mind.

23:09 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Have you heard anything from children or parents related to AI/tools they used?

23:26 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: No, neither from children nor parents, at least last year, although now the topic is developing more.

24:08 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I only discussed it with colleagues, for example, with a senior colleague about celebration poems, where I showed them what I made, and we adapted it.

24:29 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: If the “helper” wasn’t just for you but the children also interacted with it, would you allow that?

24:51 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: If it were a restricted and safe environment for use by children, yes, I would allow it, and I believe they would like it. In kindergarten, they don’t know how to write, but in primary school, it would be even more interesting to ask and get immediate answers or to create things themselves.

25:34 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Even if it’s on a computer with voice interaction, how do you think interaction with you compares to the “machine” assistant?

26:14 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Children are very curious and familiar with computers/tablets, so quite a few would prefer to ask the computer instead of me, even if the answer is the same.

27:05 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Returning to the socialization topic, if children ask AI for answers, what effect will that have on the children themselves?

27:42 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: They might not practice socialization sufficiently, because they already struggle to play/coordinate all together, especially as only children. Perhaps the activities on the computer/tablet should be collaborative, so they are required to work in groups and communicate.

28:14 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Collaborative games/activities that require more than one person to complete would help.

28:44 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: I see that in adults, too, who struggle with socialization.

28:56 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Exactly, when you’re constantly in front of a screen, you don’t learn to speak and to ask for things appropriately

29:09 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Many children “grab” something instead of asking, which is why I want technology that makes them play together, and at home, for parents to encourage joint play, not only individual play.

29:42 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: We could talk for another half hour.

29:52 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: True, shall I also tell you what I’d like you to build?

29:55 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Yes, what would be ideal for you and your children?

30:09 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I’d like some of the activities I do (e.g., colors, simple experiments like mixing colors in water) to be available on tablets, ideally three tablets in the class with games/experiments. At this age, they don’t write, so we want games, for example, “find the colors,” “drag the orange pumpkin to the correct line,” and so on.

31:06 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: The tablets should be a bit larger for group use by 2–3

children, and ideally they should support activities for the whole class in groups, not just pairs, in order to strengthen socialization.

31:41 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I don't believe that in Greece it will happen soon that such young children systematically use tablets at school; many specialists are cautious, while at home they may watch hours of screen time. Alternatively, 1–2 computers and a projector would help.

32:10 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: There are many children with difficulties, so a "quiet" calming space with a video would be useful, instead of only a storybook, when a child needs to decompress. In another year, we had a computer at the teacher's desk, and the children took turns playing educational games/puzzles, which they really liked.

32:10 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Technology is everywhere; just like English was introduced in kindergarten, I believe technology should also be integrated properly, without "replacing" us.

33:41 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Hopefully it never replaces us, the human factor matters.

33:48 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: I agree, no matter how much it advances, it won't replace us 100%; there will always be a teacher in the classroom.

33:57 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Thank you very much. I hope you weren't put in a difficult position at any point.

34:11 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: You're welcome, not at all. Whatever you build, I'll be the first to "buy" it—haha.

34:25 – ORESTIS BOLLANO: Perfect, I'll relay that to the team.

34:31 – MARIA ELEFThERIADI: Perfect.