Mizzou Elementary

This inquiry-based educational program puts students at the center of the learning process. In addition to standards-based curriculum studies in Language Arts, Science, and Mathematics (K-2) and Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics (3-5), students will also develop global awareness, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Throughout this program, students will have numerous opportunities to apply these skills as they communicate across cultures and mediums while seeking ways to make a positive difference in their communities.

We hope this guide introduces you to some of the key resources available through our program!

A Global Learning Community

As a global school, our students come to us from many backgrounds and lived experiences. It is our joy to learn in a diverse global learning community. We also view it as our responsibility to cultivate values of inclusion, friendship, community, and global awareness in all of our programs. This work starts with our youngest scholars, those in the Mizzou Elementary program. As you work through the curriculum with your students, we encourage you to build on these lessons and values, to ask students to share their stories and traditions and to incorporate books, guest speakers, videos, and resources that represent many different backgrounds. We have developed some specific resources on these topics and would be glad to share them with you as you work through the curriculum. You will also notice that some lessons have been written to center the experiences of multicultural and multilingual students including honoring home culture and language. We believe these references are important not only for our English Learners but also in fostering global awareness for all students.
About Mizzou Academy

Mizzou Academy, housed in the University of Missouri’s College of Education, is dedicated to expanding access to excellent courses and educational solutions for students locally and globally. Mizzou Academy currently serves over 7,000 students in 40+ U.S. states and 30+ countries world-wide. We offer programs across K-12 with online, blended, and classroom delivery options.

Local Impact: As a leading provider for MOCAP (formerly, Missouri Virtual Instruction Program), we have met with administrators from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to provide educational services to Missouri schools and districts, as well as individual students (particularly medically fragile students). We have also launched outreach efforts with MPER, MU Extension, and districts across the state in an attempt to expand access, launch new partnerships, and provide innovative solutions to K-12 students.

Partnership is one of our central values at Mizzou Academy.

We are dedicated to student learning and success. Our team includes experienced educators who have taught in public, private, international, and online schools.
Classroom Teachers as Instructional Leaders

The Mizzou Elementary program is intended to be delivered and taught by Classroom Teachers. Mizzou Academy has developed a rich set of instructional resources to support learning; however, it is the classroom teacher who brings this curriculum to life.

Classroom Teachers are encouraged to make instructional decisions that are best for their students. This includes bringing in their own materials and resources, differentiating, spending longer on topics that capture students’ interest or challenge their young learners, and accelerating skills and topics that students already have a great handle on.

Strategies to Support English Learners

In the 2019-2020 school year, close to 80% of our Mizzou Academy student population were English Learners. As we develop curriculum for our students, we build in strategies to support English Learners and also to honor home language and culture. You will notice some of these strategies in our Mizzou Elementary program. While these are great practices for your English Learners, we suspect you’ll also find these practices support all students.
Differentiation

Differentiation refers to the ways teachers adjust their instruction to meet the unique and diverse needs of the students within their classes. Our Mizzou Elementary curriculum includes resources to help you provide intervention and enrichment opportunities. Our core content lessons can be adapted based on your class needs. There are abundant resources including videos, read alouds, and activities to choose from in helping students master the standards and essential learning targets.

Additionally, we include guides for the following additional skills and practice:

- Literacy Skills and Strategies Grades K-2
- Literacy Skills and Strategies Grades 3-5
  - Grammar Workbooks
- Math Skills and Strategies Grades 3-5

These guides include suggestions, strategies, and practice opportunities to reinforce key concepts, teach, re-teach, and enrich classroom learning.

Inquiry-Based Learning
Language Arts

Mizzou Elementary strives to foster proficient and life-long readers and writers. Knowing that language arts, literacy, and communication are essential across all content areas, we have written extensive resources in this subject area and recommend daily language arts lessons and studies. Our balanced approach to literacy instruction supports students’ skills through whole language immersion experiences plus word study activities. Incorporating the strongest elements of the whole language and phonics into our framework, we offer developmentally appropriate resources to foster students’ success in reading and writing while also helping to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. We encourage teachers to structure their literacy block to incorporate the foundational skills needed for each grade level. Lessons include a combination of teacher-directed lessons, students learning together with their teachers, and students working independently to practice different literacy skills.

Science Skills and Reasoning

The science units at Mizzou Elementary are designed for students to take on the role of scientists and engage in opportunities that stimulate their interest in science, their understanding of the world around them, and their ability to think critically. Aligned with the Next Generation Science standards and Missouri Learning Standards, our units highlight the importance of science education and are integrated with grade-level content from our ELA and Math units.
Together with their teachers, students participate in inquiry-driven investigations that foster curiosity and compel students to ask questions, share ideas, and make conclusions. Our teacher-led demonstrations use everyday materials to make scientific discoveries and problem solve. Mizzou Elementary supports students to develop their skills in observing, questioning, hypothesizing, predicting, investigating, interpreting, and communicating, not only in science, but also in connection with other disciplines and in students’ life-long learning. Global issues like climate change, renewable resources, human migration and overpopulation, and infectious diseases are affecting all communities around our world. We believe that students can be leaders today and future change makers. They must possess the scientific literacy and knowledge to help solve the global issues impacting our world.

Mathematics

Mizzou Academy recognizes that we live in a world of increasing technological, economic, environmental, and social change and that students require a set of flexible mathematical skills for successful navigation. We strive to help students become confident thinkers who enjoy challenges, think of themselves as mathematically competent, and are creative in their approaches to solving complex tasks.

The K-5 math curriculum is designed for students to approach mathematics with an inquiry mindset and understand the relevance and application of mathematics in our world. Our lessons foster students’ leadership and communication skills so that they can demonstrate their thinking in multiple ways, including writing, diagrams, models, and mathematical argumentation and discussions. We want our students to be comfortable with risk-taking and adopt an approach to errors as an opportunity for growth. Mathematical skills, reasoning, and fluency are addressed throughout the curriculum. We also encourage teachers to use quality online resources including district resources to enhance students’ remote learning.

Image: Dr. Adrian Clifton teaches a Grade 1 Mizzou Elementary lesson
Social Studies: Grades 3-5

Our Mizzou Elementary Social Studies curriculum strives to connect students to the world around them. Our Social Studies lessons focus on these broad themes:

- Geography
- Civics
- Economics
- Government
- and U.S. History

However, we explore these themes within the context of math, science, language arts, and our global communities. Each unit also addresses leadership skills and fosters agency and advocacy, encouraging students to both be leaders in their communities and active global citizens in our world community. All lessons are purposefully aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards for Social Studies education.

Writing Across the Content Areas

Writing is the primary vehicle used to express and assess student learning across content areas. As such, we teach students to:

- Select a topic/focus.
- Use the writing process and understand the importance of revision.
- Develop beginning, middle, and end.
- Practice early research skills.
- Edit, publish, and celebrate chosen pieces of work.

Our units are integrated and students are taught writing strategies as skills that are transferable across subject areas.

The Writing Process
Families are essential learning partners. Below are a few notes on how you can help facilitate learning at home through Mizzou Elementary

- **Model Positivity.** Learning requires a sense of adventure — an openness to move outside of our comfort zones, and to press toward achievement. Learning in this new environment requires even more flexibility and intention. The more you can model a positive perspective, encourage students toward a growth mindset, and support flexibility as they encounter unfamiliar situations, the better. Your perspective is often contagious and can set the tone for learning in your home.

- **Space.** If possible, we recommend establishing a set place in your home for online learning. This might be a kitchen table, small desk, or other area in the home that your child comes to associate with online learning. Please keep school materials nearby, including the iPad, Chromebook, or other device your child will use to access video classes, notebook/paper, pencils, headphones, etc. Having a consistent routine and procedure for managing materials helps facilitate learning. Note: if you have multiple
children learning at home, you may want to spread out the spaces where each child practices synchronous learning so that a sibling’s audio isn’t a distraction for another. For asynchronous learning you may want to bring all the children together so that they can answer each other’s questions and have easy access to a family member for support.

- **Technology.** Students will likely need support to get started to ensure they know how to log in for video conference classes and other platforms that will be used. Spend time in advance practicing using the video platform so that your students are comfortable using the tools. Then, the first several meetings of class, try to have a family member nearby for support.

- **Schedule.** Your classroom teacher will send regular information about the online schedule. We are striving to have consistent morning schedules including breaks and lunch. Following the afternoon read-alouds, schedules will be more flexible to include small group work in enrichment and intervention. Please make sure you know when your child is expected to be online during these times and help them to login promptly.

- **Communication.** Look for emails and communication from your child’s classroom teachers. These messages include important information about expectations, activities, and learning.

- **Encouragement.** Your encouragement matters. Children will have independent practice activities, choice reading, and other projects to complete offline. Please encourage them with this work, help with any questions they may have, and stay positive about the learning process. Asking what your child is learning and helping them to make connections between their Mizzou Elementary lessons and other experiences in your own life, the world, or texts you may have read together helps solidify content and cultivate lifelong learning.