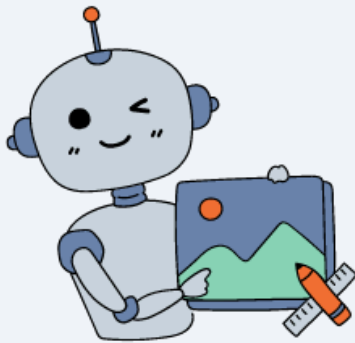


SmartStart Newsletter

Latest news from the SmartStart Teacher Academy



smart start

ERASMUS+
Teacher Academy

Project Updates

Meeting time for the work package 6 - Team!

WP6 met on May 26th in Stockholm! They discussed the ongoing work in the WP and how to move forward. Colleagues from Karlstad University and NLA visited classrooms and observed how students use AI in their learning, followed by great discussions with the teachers.



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We are social!

Check out our Social Media Presence on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to stay updated on project insights, teacher training activities, and the latest developments in AI in education. Join the conversation and discover how SmartStart is shaping innovative and responsible teaching practices.



We are social!



AI Tools



AI Tools for Teachers Corner: Mizou AI for Elementary Education

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University



In the landscape of modern educational technology, **Mizou AI** (often referred to as Mitzou) is widely regarded as a pioneer platform for creating safe, teacher-led artificial intelligence experiences specifically for young learners.

Alice Gruber identified four primary ways students engage with AI tools: requesting examples, seeking structural guidance, asking for feedback, and submitting requests for grading (Gruber, 2025). Mitzou states that its platform meets several academic standards for safe, teacher-led elementary instruction by providing a suite of tools that prioritize teacher control and student safety.

Versatile Functions for the Primary Classroom

Mizou AI is distinguished by its wide range of functions that allow teachers to build highly customized chatbot experiences. For elementary education, this means:

- **Tailored Chatbots:** Teachers can create "pedagogical agents" that act as tutors or reading partners, helping children aged 4–9 explore foundational concepts through guided conversation (Ren & Wu, 2025; Yue et al., 2022)
- **Multimedia Integration:** The platform supports images, audio, and text, making it accessible for students who are still developing their literacy skills.
- **Adaptive Learning:** Much like the best practices identified in systematic reviews of K–12 AI, Mizou allows teachers to present content with varying degrees of complexity, ensuring every child can learn at their own pace (Çelik et al., 2022; Yue et al., 2022)

Simplicity and Ease of Use

The platform is widely praised for being easy to navigate for both educators and young students. A major draw for elementary teachers is the "no-login" approach for children. Students simply click a secure link provided by their teacher to start an activity, which eliminates the need for complex account management and facilitates data privacy. The interface is intuitive, allowing teachers to manage their "classrooms" and deploy new activities in just a few clicks (Deckker & Sumanaesekara, 2025; Rudnik, 2024).



What Teachers Are Saying

Educators who use Mizou AI highlight its ability to foster "experience and exploration," which are critical components for introducing AI to young children (Yue et al., 2022). Teachers report that the platform:

1. Enhances Motivation: The interactive nature of the chatbots provides immediate feedback, which keeps elementary students engaged and motivated during independent tasks (Altınay et al., 2024; Çelik et al., 2022).

2. Supports Personalized Instruction: By using AI to define students' individual needs and provide real-time intervention, teachers can spend more time on high-level mentoring and social-emotional support (Çelik et al., 2022).

3. Acts as a Collaborative Partner: Many educators see the platform as a tool that enhances—rather than replaces—their role, acting as an "assistant teacher" that facilitates a student-centric learning environment (Low et al., 2025; Ren & Wu, 2025).

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Website:

<https://mizou.com/education>

Tutorial:

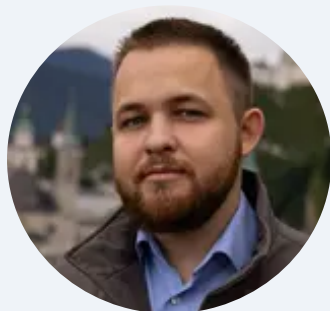
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hrhq_xe_HJ4



Research Insights



Maximilian Stark,
Research Assistant



Who Are the Teachers Who Focus on AI in the Classroom?

Sociologists map the adoption of new technologies - such as generative AI - on a curve (see Rogers, 2003). First, a small percentage of innovators engage with a technology when it is brand-new and often still hard to use. Next come the early adopters who are excited by change but are not quite as prone to taking risks. Only after this does a technology break through into the mainstream and is adopted by the majority. Finally, there is generally a group of sceptics and traditionalists who hold off on adoption or reject the new technology outright.

For the teaching profession, it is important to stress that neither overly enthusiastic early adoption nor full-on rejection are probably ideal. Teachers have a responsibility for their students' learning and well-being, so technologies should be employed judiciously, after understanding their risks. For AI, these include detriments to social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as data-protection, copyright, and environmental concerns (see e.g. Burns, 2026). This is why SmartStart aims to develop a

framework to make teachers knowledgeable and competent at adopting the right kind of AI tools for the right tasks and at rejecting those tools that do more harm than good.

For the current reality of AI in schools, it is therefore important to ask ourselves: Which teachers have already adopted AI, to which extent, and why? The UTAUT Model (Venkatesh et al., 2003) posits that individuals adopt new technologies in their occupation based on whether they expect that the technology will help them perform better in their job; whether they expect it to be easy to use; whether they think it is socially expected of them; and whether the necessary organisational and technical infrastructure is present. These factors are moderated by gender, age, experience, and voluntariness of use, with younger men typically being most likely to be early adopters.

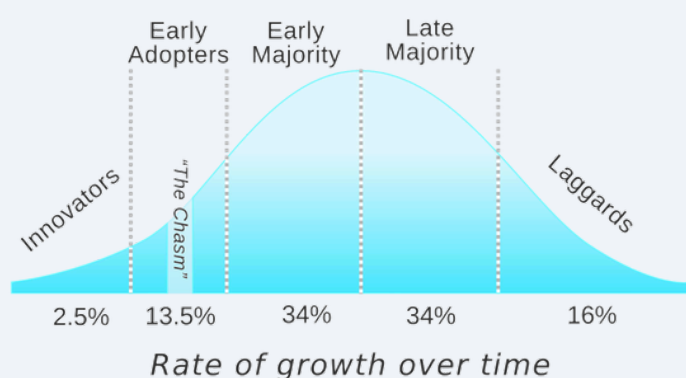
This year, Baier-Mosch et al. conducted a survey of 177 German teachers regarding their knowledge about AI, their attitudes towards engaging with it, and their willingness to teach it to students. They found that younger teachers felt somewhat more positively about teaching students about AI, but that older teachers found it somewhat more important to do so. These older teachers also reported more difficulty in learning about AI and less knowledge about it—which may explain why they found explicitly teaching children about it more important.



A similar pattern emerged between female and male teachers: Female teachers reported somewhat less positive feelings about teaching AI and less knowledge about it but found it more important to explicitly teach it to students, compared to their male colleagues.

The effect sizes in Baier-Mosch et al.'s study were not particularly large—a sign that individual teachers' particular dispositions play a larger role than their demographics when it comes to engaging with AI and teaching students about it. Still, these findings emphasize that training of teachers' AI-related competencies needs to account for where they are coming from regarding their knowledge and feelings about the technology and to which extent they are already using it.

Innovation Adoption Curve



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