



Instructor Guide to the Immersive Classroom

Getting Started

More than just a technology tool, the Immersive Classroom is a way to rethink teaching across time. It extends your live class into the asynchronous space, enabling all students to contribute to discussions and activities. Instead of watching others engage in active learning, asynchronous students can now participate in those moments themselves. Best of all, IC is automatically installed for all eligible courses and requires no technical setup on your part – allowing you to focus on teaching rather than tools.

 **Note:** When you teach, you will teach in Zoom (like normal)! Your students will watch and learn in the Immersive Classroom.

 Throughout this guide, we'll refer to students who are watching class recordings as “**async students.**”

[See what Immersive Classroom looks like from the student perspective](#)

Overview of Features

ZoomChat+	Live Messaging	Bookmarks	Respond	Pair Up	Polls
Lets async students contribute to live class Zoom chat*	Students can message peers watching at the same time	Students can mark spots in the video and take individual notes	Generates a class discussion board right where you need it	Generates a “Think, Pair, Share” activity for async students	Enables async students to participate in Zoom polls*

* These features are most relevant for fully online courses


These core features are available to your students at any time, but the interactive tools are most useful when **intentionally prompted** by the instructor. Encouraging your async students to use these tools at targeted moments during your live class will

maximize engagement. You can find more detailed information and instructions for each tool further in this guide.

Your Role in the Immersive Classroom

Before Class: Plan for Participation


Using Immersive Classroom does not require a technical setup—everything is already installed and automatically available to your students. Preparing to teach with IC is less about learning a new tool and more about adjusting your teaching mindset. The more active learning you build into live class sessions, the stronger your asynchronous students' experience will be too!

 **Note:** *Whether you teach live over Zoom or an in-person classroom, your async students will watch and participate in the Immersive Classroom. You do not need to access the IC while you teach.*

For your first few classes, we recommend the following:

- Review your class plan and identify moments of active learning (e.g. discussion questions, group work, activities, polls).
- For each interaction or activity, consider:
 - Which Immersive Classroom feature should your asynchronous students use to participate? (ZoomChat+, Respond, Pair Up, or Polls)
 - What will you say—directly to the camera—to invite their participation?
 - Practice your prompts out loud! (*Tip: Use our [slide templates and visual banners](#) as reminders to address your async students*)

As you gain experience, these prompts will become second nature, and you won't need to plan each interaction in advance.

 **Tip:** *It's a good idea to introduce the Immersive Classroom and your expectations for async engagement in your syllabus and Canvas site before the first day of class.*

During Class: Teach as Usual, Just Talk to Your Students

For the most part, you'll teach your live class the same way you always do. The key difference is remembering to turn to the camera and invite asynchronous students to participate in activities as they watch the recording.


Day 1: Orient Your Students

On the first day of class, take a few minutes to introduce students to the Immersive Classroom:

- Speak directly to your asynchronous students through the camera.* Let them know that they're a valued part of the course community, and their participation through IC matters.
- Ask live students to say hello in the Zoom chat, and invite async students to respond so everyone can see how Zoom Chat+ works.

Throughout the Semester: Encourage Engagement

During activities, turn to the camera and ask your async students to join by adding to the chat or hitting the activity button you want them to use (Respond, Pair Up, or Polls)

 **Tip:** Adding a small banner to your slides reminding students which button to use can be very effective. Please feel free to [copy and adapt the banners in this slide deck](#).

** If you teach in an in-person classroom, turn toward the videographer to address your async students.*


After Class: Closing the Loop

Students are far more likely to keep using Immersive Classroom when they know their contributions are being seen. You don't need to respond to every comment—simply acknowledging and addressing participation goes a long way. You can make async students feel connected by actively bringing their contributions into the live class conversation.

Review Async Contributions

Before your next class:

1. Go to **Class Recordings** in Canvas. Open the previous class video.
2. Click **Instructor Dash** at the bottom of the video.
3. Select **View & Pin Content** to review async student contributions.
4. Save a few comments you'd like to highlight using the pin icon.

 **Note:** *Zoom Chat+ appears on the left; other activities appear to the right in chronological order. Scroll horizontally to view all activities that occurred throughout class.*

Spotlight Async Contributions in Class

At the start of your next live class:

1. Open the Instructor Dashboard and select Present Pins. This will generate a carousel of the pinned comments.*
2. Share your screen and discuss the highlighted comments with your live students.

**Alternatively, you can address async comments verbally, and/or add them to your slides.*

When asynchronous students watch the recording later, they'll see their contributions featured—reinforcing that their work matters and is part of the shared course experience.

Features

Let's get to know IC's core features in more depth. These are available to your students at any time, but work best when intentionally prompted.

Encouraging your async students to use the **Zoom Chat+**, **Respond**, and **Pair Up** tools at targeted moments during your live class will maximize engagement.

Zoom Chat+

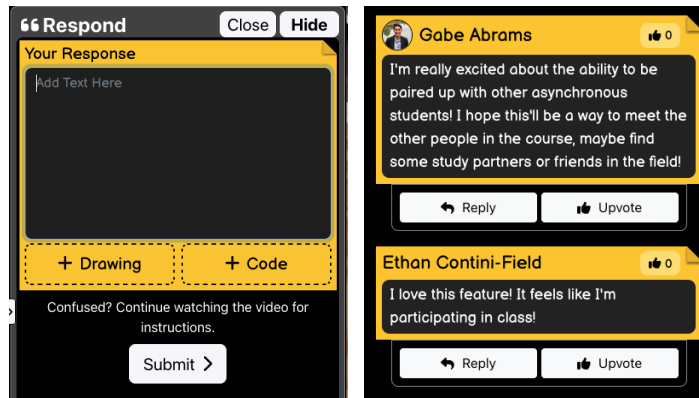
Imports the Zoom chat from your live class and syncs it with the course video so that async students can contribute within the flow of the discussion.

Best For	How it works	What to Say
<p>Quick popcorn questions to solicit student ideas</p> <p>Informal interactions between live and async students</p> <p>Allowing async students to join a conversation happening via Zoom chat</p>	<p>When async students watch a recorded class, they can view the Zoom chat stream from the live session, synced up with the video so that they can contribute messages within the flow of conversation.</p> <p>Anyone who views a class recording will see the contributions of both live students and all prior asynchronous students.</p>	<p><i>“There are some great comments and questions in the chat. Async students, please add your thoughts too.”</i></p> <p><i>“Live and async students, put one word in the Zoom Chat to describe your reaction to this week’s reading.”</i></p> <p><i>“Live students, raise your hands and unmute to respond to this thought question. Async students, pop your ideas into the chat.”</i></p>

Respond

An auto-generated discussion board built directly into the video player. Students can reflect on deeper prompts or thought questions posed by the instructor while watching the class recording.


Best For	How it works	What to Say
<p>In-depth reflection on a particular topic or focused discussion question.</p> <p>Great for when your live class is having discussions as either a full class or in small groups.</p>	<p>When async students click the Respond button, they see a text box where they can enter their replies.</p> <p>Students can respond with text, drawing, and/or code snippets.</p> <p>Once they submit, they see and can comment on their classmates' responses.</p>	<p><i>“For those of you watching asynchronously, click Respond to share your thoughts.”</i></p> <p><i>“Async students: while live students are in breakout rooms, I’d love to hear what you think about this question. Click Respond and take the next 10 minutes to submit your reflection.”</i></p>

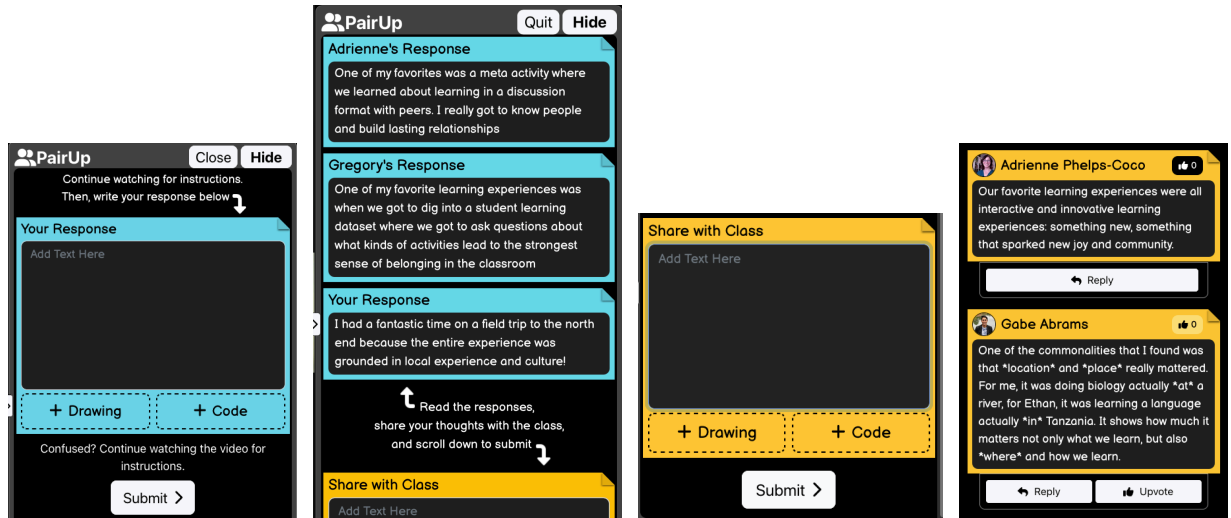


Pair Up

An auto-generated “Think, Pair, Share” activity that partners students with a peer across time. Async students (1) write their initial thoughts about a prompt, (2) read & reflect upon two peers’ responses, and finally (3) share their final thoughts.

Best For	How it works	What to Say
<p>Small group activities where it's beneficial for students to see each other's work before doing a final share out.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students click the Pair Up button to write their initial thoughts. ("Think"). As an instructor, you will not see these initial responses. 2) After submitting, they are shown two prior responses from classmates who already watched the recording. ("Pair") 3) After reading their peers’ comments, students write their final thoughts in the “Share with Class” text field. These responses will be visible to you (the instructor) and the entire class. (“Share”) After submitting, students can view and respond to a Share with Class board. <p><i>*Note: The first student to arrive will receive a notification to come back later in order to complete the activity.</i></p>	<p><i>“Async learners — now it's your turn! Click Pair Up and respond to the prompt.</i></p> <p><i>Once you see another student's post, think about what connections or contrasts do you notice between their example and your own. Would their approach work for a different context? Share out with the class.”</i></p>

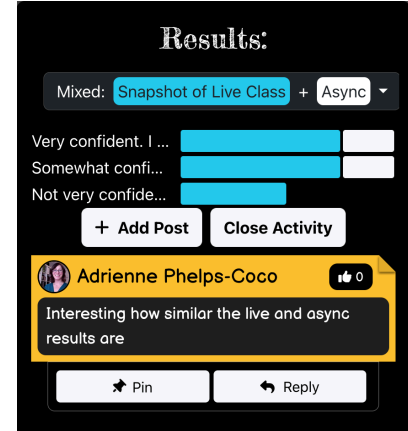
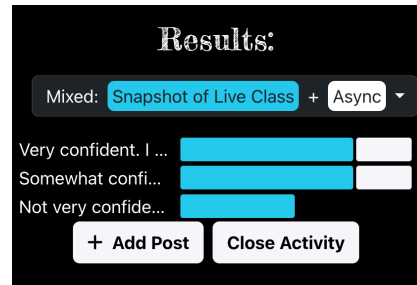
 **Tip:** It can be helpful to give students guidance on what to share out. For example: *“Do you see any commonalities with your classmates?” or “Now that you’ve read your classmates’ responses, has your stance shifted? How so?”*



Polls

Allows async students to participate in Zoom polls from your live class session.

Supported Types	How it works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single question multiple choice polls • Multi-question multiple choice polls 	<p>Begin by launching a poll in Zoom for your live students. The Immersive Classroom will automatically import the poll for async students.</p> <p>Prompt your async students to select the “Poll” button. They will see the same options as live students.</p> <p>When they submit their answer, they will see the results from the live class plus the results from other async students. They have the option to add or upvote comments on the poll.</p>



Bookmarks

Allows students to privately flag moments in the video and take notes for themselves.

Co-Watching Alerts & Live Messaging

Notifies students if others are watching at the same time and allows them to message each other.

See Immersive Classroom in Action

Check out this [interactive demo](#) to get a sense of what your students will see. (HarvardKey login required).