

## IES SBIR AWARD:

2007 Fast-Track (Phase I and Phase II), \$850,000

## KEY INFORMATION:

Address: 708 W. 1800 N., Unit 1A Logan, UT 84321

Website: <http://www.thereNow.net/>  
Product Demo:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/21stCenTeacher#p/a/u/0/93qLfjDsZ1A>

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**PROJECT TITLE:** The *IRIS Connect* Classroom Observation and Performance Feedback System

**PRODUCT:** The product facilitates teacher induction, teacher professional development, and observational research. Through a camera, audio device, and web-based software, IRIS Connect allows observers (e.g., expert coaches, peer teachers, researchers, student-teacher advisors) to observe, collect research data, and give individualized feedback to teachers in their classrooms without visiting the classroom in person.

**DEVELOPMENT:** To develop the IRIS, thereNow used an iterative process to manufacture a series of prototype camera systems. First, the hardware development team identified the best technologies available for capturing audio and video in the classroom environment and then developed a flexible hardware platform that could be easily modified as the data from field testing warranted. After field testing various designs, a final design was selected for production. The final hardware platform uses plastic injection molded components to house the electronics and a custom aluminum frame. The

software development team identified the essential features and roadmap for implementation. Initial product launches allowed the team to receive feedback from customers for improvements in usability and ideas for new features. The software development roadmap has been constantly updated to reflect these changes.



**RESEARCH:** As the initial hardware and software prototypes were deployed into classrooms and in the offices of the instructional experts, thereNow conducted usability research, focus groups, and interviews with 12 teachers and 1 professional development expert to determine which aspects of the technology needed improvement. Results demonstrated that the technology successfully enabled the characteristics of effective teacher professional development. That is, the technology enabled a coaching model that allowed coaches to provide feedback to teachers that was individualized, immediate, in the context of the classroom, and

ongoing. The technology was also found to support classroom observation methods for education researchers.

**PATH TO COMMERCIALIZATION:** thereNow has commercialized IRIS through direct sales in the U.S., as well as with its distribution partner, thereNow Europe. Since 2005, thereNow has deployed its technology into hundreds of schools across the U.S. and Europe. IRIS Connect is also being used by researchers in five federally funded research studies.

