

# IRIS Connect



*“The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers”*

McKinsey, 2007

*“The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teaching”*

Husband, 2013

*“Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as thousands of workshops and conferences that led to no significant change in practice when teachers returned to the classrooms”*

Fullan, 1991

## The Challenge:

To provide sustainable, replicable and cost effective learning opportunities that impact upon teacher practice and quality.

## The Question:

Can we use the efficiencies of technology to improve outcomes and reduce costs within 21st Century schools?

## What is IRIS Connect?

By using video collaboration technologies to break down the barriers to accessing theory, reflecting and collaborating with others, we make those activities sustainable and scalable. Research has identified that up to [95% of teachers](#) using IRIS Connect to report improvements in practice.

IRIS Connect is, in many ways, content agnostic but it is based upon a deep knowledge of how adults learn and levers technology to provide a 21st Century solution that is simple and attractive to use within the complexity of a school-based environment. Although IRIS Connect uses advanced video technology, its beauty is within the platform that enables all the key interactions that research has shown to be required for those activities necessary to change and develop positive teacher behaviours.

We believe that empowered, connected and confident teachers are stronger teachers and that stronger teachers nurture better outcomes for learners. IRIS Connect exists to bridge the gap between effective professional learning and the reality of classrooms.

IRIS Connect is a powerful and scalable approach to improving the experience and outcomes of professional development at a fraction of the cost of traditional CPD.

# What problem can we solve?

A central theme of our early white papers [‘Making the Network for Teachers’ \(2010\)](#) and [‘Going Beyond CPD’ \(2011\)](#), is that traditional CPD pays insufficient attention to effective approaches for adult learning. Research has suggested that less than 1% of traditional CPD transformed teacher practice (snapshot survey by CUREE, 2011 for TDA). In particular, the appropriate **blend and combination** of the following key features are often missing:

- Modelling
- Access to relevant theory that can immediately put into practice
- Contextualised learning within the reality of the school
- The opportunity to visibly practice what has been learnt
- Coaching with low risk developmental feedback
- Accessing communities of collaborative practice
- Self review and self directed learning
- Research and enquiry activities

Moreover, there is increasing evidence that effective, ongoing professional development and collegial support have a significant impact on teacher retention, as discussed and highlighted in the conference that we held with and at the University of Cambridge, [‘Recruit, Train, Develop, Retain’ \(2016\)](#).

Based on our early and on-going research, we have designed a system which allows teachers to be informed, connected contributors, tapping into the expertise in their school, their network, and the wider education system that enables them to become agents of change.

## IRIS Connect enables:

- **Access to theory** in attractive multimedia formats at times convenient to the teacher
- **Contextualised coaching** and **mentoring** from both internal colleagues and external consultants in ‘real time’ or at times convenient to the teacher
- **Self review** and self reflection
- Shared libraries of **best practice**
- **Research and Action Research** within or across schools
- **Building communities of practice** which can extend across one school, a group of schools or even to education systems across the world



- The confidence that teachers control the process end to end.

NB the exceptionally successful Film Clubs show how many of these key elements of effective CPD can all be blended in an accessible and easy-to-use format. So far, 17,500 teachers in the UK are enrolled in Film Club:

<https://www.irisconnect.com/uk/products-and-services/iris-connect-film-club/>

The IRIS Connect team has a clear understanding of the ‘theory to practice’ of professional development. IRIS Connect was built to support the development of a trust-based learning community with exceptionally high levels of security and teacher permissioning which, together with leadership from school managers, minimises the tensions inherent in using video technology.

## Design principles

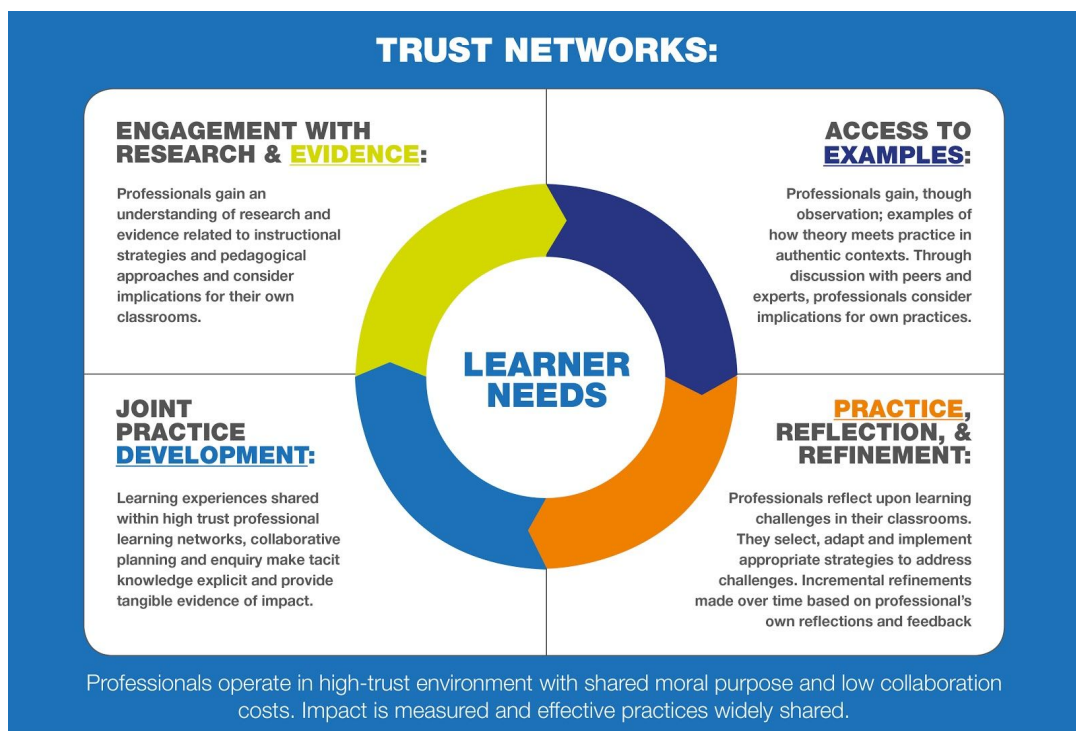
Our design principles flow from research; specifically that of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers who were the first to fully identified the characteristics of effective CPD in 2005.

Their findings are still broadly echoed by the professional learning research community.

The following graphic is adapted from the work of Joyce and Showers; a short prec of which was provided by The National College of School Leadership:

TYPE OF EXPERIENCE	WHAT IT DOES	IMPACT ON CLASSROOM PRACTICE
Presentation	Helps the learner understand a new skill, strategy or teaching practice.	5%
+ Modeling and demonstration	Provides the learner with a chance to see ‘ <i>what it looks like</i> ’.	10%
+ Practice	Allows the learner to practice in a workshop or within a professional learning community.	20%
+ Developmental feedback	Helps the learner to modify their performance to be more effective.	20%
+ Coaching and mentoring	Provides the learner with <u>contextualised</u> coaching and mentoring to embed skills in the classroom.	90%

*“The first component focuses on knowledge and exploring the theory or rationale for the new skills or strategies. Subsequently... training needs to involve modelling the new skills...a setting closely approximate to the workplace. The third component is the practice of the skill...Finally the fourth component, is the collaborative work of teachers in planning and developing the lessons and materials to implement with fidelity.”*



Critically, it has been demonstrated that transfer to practice in the absence of this blended approach, is extremely limited.

Our design philosophy has been to use video collaboration technologies to remove the practical and cultural barriers to each of these core components.

- 1) Our platform tools can be used to develop and deliver scalable, on-demand, learning materials that engage teachers with **theory and evidence**.
- 2) We bring the research evidence and course materials to life with video, allowing teachers to experience authentic **examples of teaching strategies**. We provide tools to facilitate teachers' professional conversations, enabling them to better conceptualise new material.

- 3) We support teachers to reflect upon video of their own classrooms as they go about **practising, adapting and refining** strategies for their own context.
- 4) By supporting teachers to share their practice with others and providing powerful tools for analysis and feedback, we support **joint practice development and school based research**

### A proven track record of delivery and success

Founded in 2008 following research projects into effective adult learning, our platform has become widely established across the UK education system. Pioneering the use of video for CPD has given us a wealth of experience, not only in developing the tools required, but critically, the frameworks and approaches necessary to engage teachers impactfully. Fundamentally, engaging with IRIS Connect not only offers class-leading tools but also stability, experience, capacity and scale.

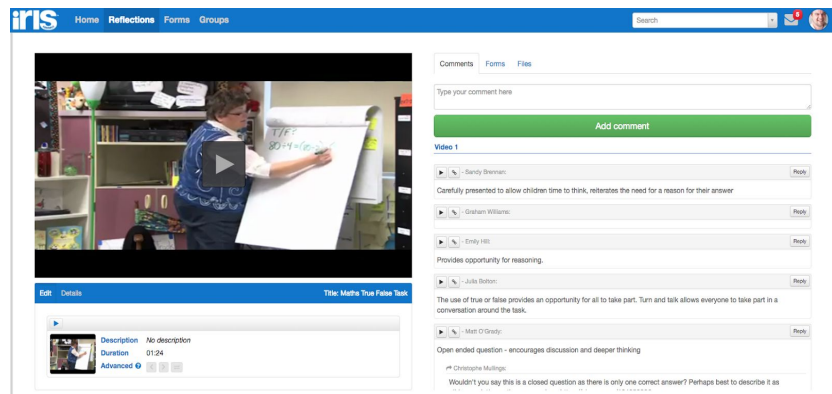
The company's headquarters are in Brighton and our network of regional strategic partners comprises of over 100 professionals across the UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the USA. We have worked with and continue to collaborate with many educational organisations, including the British Council, The Chartered College of Teaching, The Teacher Development Trust, Whole Education, the MirandaNet Fellowship and the National Teacher Enquiry Network, as well as several universities as well as the European Schoolnet in Europe. We are also involved in a number of Erasmus + projects around ITE and ongoing CPD.



IRIS Connect is trusted by over 2,000 organisations in 26 countries worldwide.

# Platform tools

Videos are automatically uploaded to a teacher's personal library on the IRIS Connect platform. From here, they may review their videos or videos which have been shared with them by other members in their trust network. Our reflection interface is rich with tools which make the learning and collaborative experience more effective.

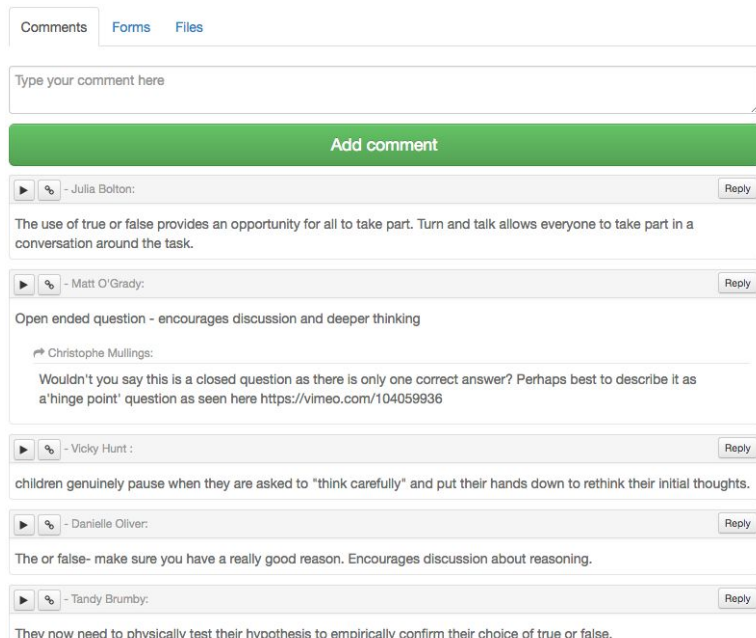


The teacher can share their videos with their coach and the coach can respond with fully contextualised feedback using the time-linked notes. The coach can view in real time or at a time convenient to them.

## Time-linked, threaded comments

Create a threaded conversation between professionals, linked to the timeline of the video to create contextualised professional conversations. Users either watch the video and the notes will highlight at the relevant time, or click on the note to navigate to the relevant part of the video.

As a modelling tool, teachers can explicate their videos with time-linked notes, drawing the observer's attention not only to what they were doing at a specific moment, but critically, explaining *why* they were doing it. When used as a feedback tool commentaries shift from broad and vague to specific and actionable. **The dialogic nature of the tool, encourages the**





**evidence-based professional conversations at the heart of effective developmental relationships and enables truly effective coaching.**

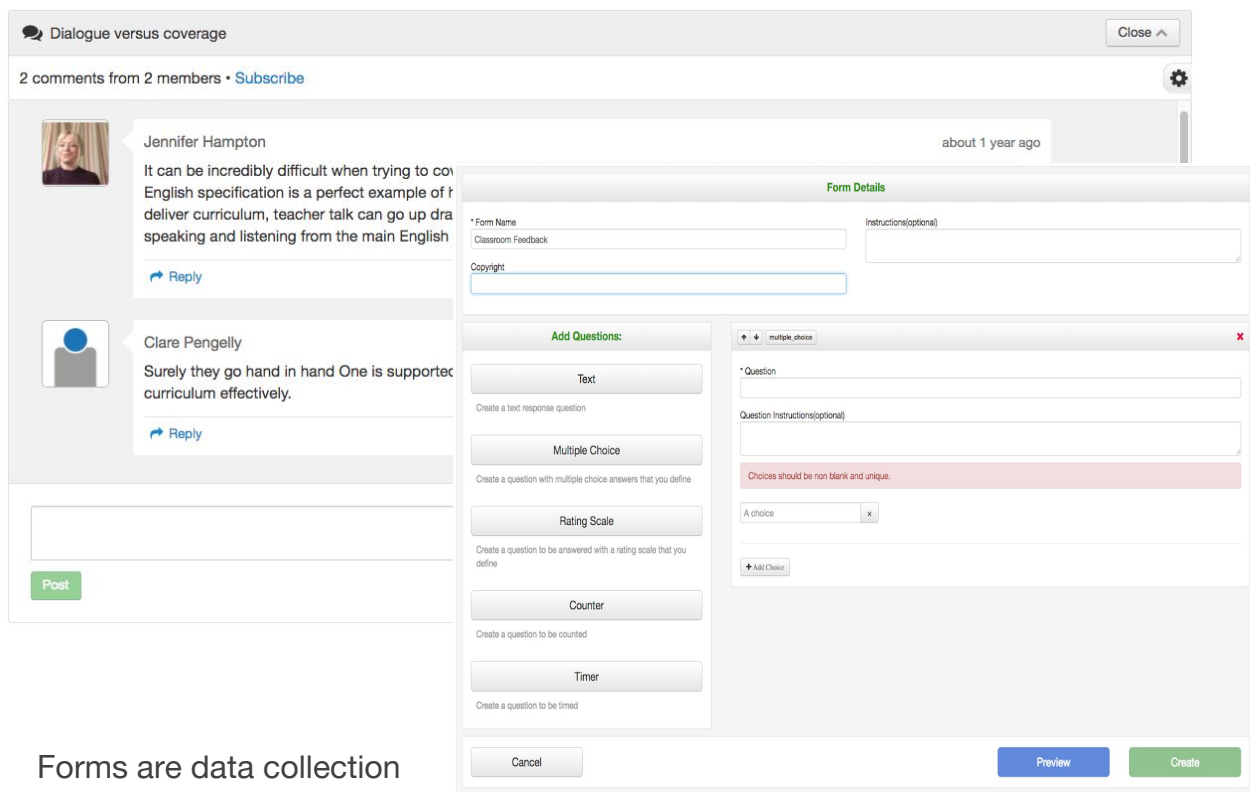
## Moments

Every time-linked conversation can be linked from elsewhere, taking the user to a precise moment in a video. Moments may be embedded into other learning platforms or emails to help focus learning conversations. QR codes may even be embedded into documents allowing teachers to watch illustrative videos and engage in professional dialogue as they review printed materials.



## Discussion boards

Broader **collaborative conversations** may happen in discussion boards associated with video or other multimedia content delivered via our groups.



Dialogue versus coverage

2 comments from 2 members • [Subscribe](#)

Jennifer Hampton  
It can be incredibly difficult when trying to con English specification is a perfect example of h deliver curriculum, teacher talk can go up dra speaking and listening from the main English  
[Reply](#)

Clare Pengelly  
Surely they go hand in hand One is supporte curriculum effectively.  
[Reply](#)

Post

**Form Details**

\* Form Name  
Classroom Feedback

Instructions(optional)

Copyright

**Add Questions:**

- Text  
Create a text response question
- Multiple Choice  
Create a question with multiple choice answers that you define
- Rating Scale  
Create a question to be answered with a rating scale that you define
- Counter  
Create a question to be counted
- Timer  
Create a question to be timed

**multiple choice**

\* Question

Question Instructions(optional)

Choices should be non blank and unique.

A choice

[Add Choice](#)

Cancel Preview Create

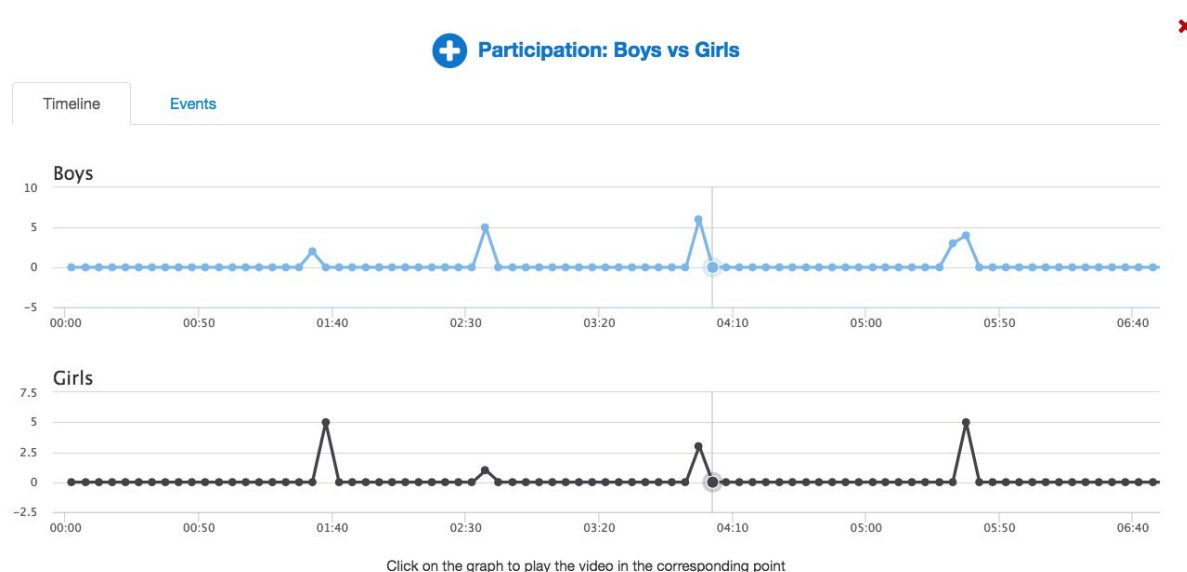
Forms are data collection tools which work alongside a recorded video or in real

time. The form is a data collection framework which allows the observer to respond to specific questions about practice.

These responses are recorded and tagged to specific moments within the video. **This enables coaching to be both contextualised and evidence-based.**

Once the data collection is complete, the form produces reports which analyse the data in a number of ways.

Importantly, the time-link is retained in the report to allow the user to navigate back to the specific moments in the video to which the data relates. Additionally, the data can be aggregated and averaged over multiple user responses and/or over time.



## Sharing

Recorded videos may be shared either with other individuals or with groups. This is the bedrock of collaboration on the IRIS Connect platform. The recorded teacher is in control of who the video is shared with and for how long, building confidence and thereby sustainable use. Once a video is shared, it becomes a space for collaboration. Time-linked comments can be made and replied to by all parties, forms can be responded to and the data from all responses reported upon. A notification is sent when someone else comments on the teacher's video, drawing users back onto the platform for secure professional dialogue. Sharing in this way,

when linked to the creation of a 'Group' enables **Joint Practice Development within and across schools.**

Copy video link
Copy video link at current time

**Share with Users**


x Matt Newell |

**Share with Groups**

x Crawley Film Club Induction

## Groups

We formalise sharing via Groups. At their most basic, they are video sharing libraries, however, they are also flexible communication and collaboration spaces which enable teachers to share a range of multimedia resources (including chat forums and media from other platforms) and collaborate to refine their classroom practices and build knowledge.




**Episode 1: The Empire Talks Back - Dialogue**

- Homepage
- The rationale
- A school's perspective
- Task 1: Background reading and preparation**
- The research (15 mins)
- Implications (15 mins)
- Reflections (20 mins)
- Printable PDFs
- Research-led practitioner certificate (dialogue)
- Task 2: Film club - the screening**
- Film Club screening
- Collaborative practitioner certificate (dialogue)
- Task 3: Your practice**
- Teach, record, reflect, share
- The big discussion

**Homepage**


Welcome to Film Club episode 1: The Empire Talks Back



**What is Film Club?**

It's a place:

- for constructive, professional dialogue
- to collaborate, share and build knowledge
- to give and receive constructive feedback
- to focus on learning, not the teacher
- to focus on learning, not the learner



In the 2 years since the launch of this feature, users of IRIS Connect have already created over 9,500 collaborative groups on the platform, ranging from spaces for teachers and teaching assistants to collaborate, through to coaching groups associated with Multi-Academy Trusts.

Our highly successful Film Club professional learning programme facilitated through groups has over 16,000 teacher subscribers. It enables teachers to access high quality learning materials, coaching opportunities, reflect individually or in groups,

share and develop resources. It is an exemplary example of Joint Practice Development and was highly evaluated by the EEF and Birmingham University with over 95% of participants saying they had changed their practice as a consequence. They cited more collaboration, more open questions and dialogue with the children and more emphasis on feedback that shared responsibility with the pupil.

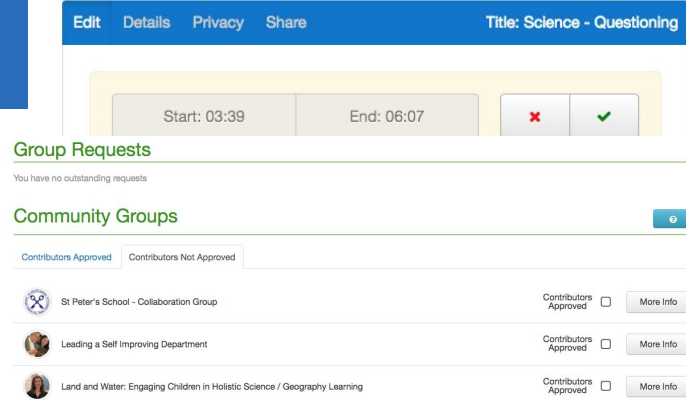
## Editing

Any video on the IRIS Connect platform may be edited by its owner. Sections of video may be “copied” from one reflection and “pasted” into a new or existing reflection. No video is lost in this process.



## Trust networks and permission management

Our whole business is geared around working with each school to help them discharge their responsibilities under the DPA and especially the GDPR.



## Class-leading learning environment

Our platform tools are developed from years of research and feedback from our users. Our system has been designed to enable the blend of professional learning experiences shown to lead to high levels of teacher progress and sustained behavioural change.

## Impactful

IRIS Connect is shown by [independent research](#) to make a difference where it matters:

- 95% say their teaching has improved
- 88% say their confidence has risen
- 85% feel there has been a positive impact on collaboration

We have a proven capacity for delivering our service globally and successfully in varied environments as evidenced by our wide-ranging [case studies](#) and our recent and current projects. We're incredibly proud of the hundreds of [testimonials](#) we've received, demonstrating the great things teachers are achieving with our platform.

## Evidence-led



### *Inspired by research*

University of Sussex  
Utah State University



### *Used as a resource in research*

Harvard University  
VIA University College  
Mathematica



### *Subject of research*

University of Bedfordshire  
University of Birmingham  
Education Endowment Fund

IRIS Connect is built upon research into effective professional learning. We have been used by educational research programmes all over the world and engaged in research programmes to assess and refine our own tools.

You can also find further related research, including our EFF evaluation report on our [research page](#).

Since its conception, IRIS Connect has evolved significantly. However, our mission in the education sector has remained the same: to drive improvements in educational outcomes through more effective professional development for teachers and schools.



# Products and services

## IRIS Connect video capture applications for mobile devices

For teachers to collaboratively reflect on classroom teaching, it is vital to capture footage of sufficient quality to enable rich analysis and discussion. At IRIS Connect, we have focused on balancing simplicity with fidelity to create unique apps for lesson capture.



### Mobile app features

**Multi platform:** Available for both Android and Apple devices.

**Supports BYOD:** Aligned with a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach to video capture or as part of our all-in-one Discovery Kit and Starter Kit solutions.

**Simple and easy to use:** 'A rated' system usability score.

**Built for classrooms:** Screens darkens during recording to minimise distraction. Unique "shake marker" tool allows teachers to simply shake their microphone during the recording to place a notable moment on the timeline of the video for later review.

**Mobile:** Can be repositioned on the fly to capture group work.

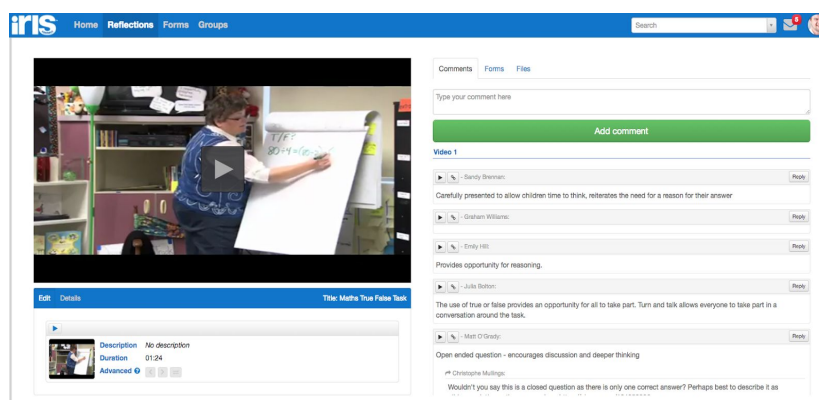
**Dual video:** Enables teachers to focus on both teaching *and* learning.

**Four way audio:** Enables reflections to successfully capture classroom dialogue.

**Open:** Compatible with a range of microphone systems for better audio recording.

**Innovative:** "Go-Live" enables observers to remotely observe and communicate with the teacher and learners in real time. All live sessions are recorded along with comments and analysis for later review.

**Unparalleled mobile security:** Teachers enter their IRIS Connect username and password to enable the recording or GoLive session. Recorded videos are encrypted on the device and for additional security cannot be reviewed locally. Videos are securely uploaded to the teacher's account on the IRIS Connect platform. Upload is resilient, meaning if network connection is lost, video upload will pause and resume once the connection is available. The connection and video transfer are securely encrypted. Critically, once the upload is complete the video is permanently deleted from the local device.



## Security and data management

IRIS Connect takes the responsibility of acting as a processor of personal data extremely seriously. To protect our customers we have ensured that we offer a secure service that meets up to the best practices required by the DFE and the ICO, in addition to being compliant to the GDPR. We constantly review our procedural, organisational and physical security to ensure that we are offering a service that meets the latest guidelines.

We regularly work with external consultants to review our security and have completed multiple independent audits, gap analyses and penetration tests of our services to ensure that we meet industry best practices. Most relevant to schools in the UK are:

Department of Education Cloud Services Provider Certification	Independent accreditation on website
GDPR Gap Analysis GDPR Compliant	Audit carried out by Risk-x in November 2017
UK Government Cyber Security	Independent accreditation on website