Nick: Hello and welcome backto another edition of the Innovation in Professional Development Apple Podcast with me, Nick and today's guest, Apple Professional Learning Specialist, Paul Tullock. Thanks for joining me, Paul. How are you?

Paul: I'm very well, thank you. I'm delighted to be chatting to you about all things Apple today, so thanks for asking me along!
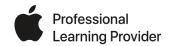
Nick: It's an absolute pleasure. It's great that you've been able
to join us for today's episode Paul. So I know many people listening will know you or know of you as you're a very active member of the Apple community. Just to set some context I suppose around today's session, to give a brief introduction to those who may be not so familiar with your work, you're an Apple Professional Development Consultant for Jigsaw24 who are an Apple authorised education specialist. As I mentioned, you're an APLS. So I wonder if you should start by giving us an idea of your personal journey with Apple in education and then giving us an insight into what your current role involves?

Paul: Yeah, no worries. So I was a teacher for 14 years and about maybe five or six years into that journey, I had a child who was really struggling. In fact, I was told he was really badly behaved, turns out he was dyslexic. At the time, my wife's school was doing 1 to 1 iPads and I became interested in all things iPads to see if I could support him. The transformation was unbelievable. Within the space of about three months, he was an entirely different child and he could access learning. From there my passion grew. So we implemented a class set of iPads, and then I moved schools to a school that wanted to go to 1 to 1 iPads and we did that for two, three years, got ourselves in a really good place. Then I applied to become part of the ADE community. The Apple Distinguished Educator community in 2017. Since then it's just been completely, fully embedded. It's one of the main tools I couldn't live without. I just couldn't teach without an iPad.

Nick: It's a really interesting way actually in which the way you first kind of engaged I suppose with Apple technology and how you noticed that it is really impacting education with that one particular child that you had in your class really, I suppose. As with all of our other guests on the Apple Podcast series, I think it's fair to say that you have a wealth of experience behind you. I've known you for some time now, and following for some time and I suppose in your role and your background, is one in which I can relate to as well. We probably have similar backgrounds in terms of our teaching journey and now in our respective consultancy roles, and it wouldn't be a lie to say I suppose that every day is a different day working in the jobs that we do. I know we were talking earlier about some of the things that you've been doing working with such a diverse range of schools, academy trusts and various other organisations. I suppose that's part of the reason we love doing what we do. There's no doubt there's a huge range and huge amount of things that we can talk about over the next 15 minutes or so, but we're going to try and focus our attention on how we can really go about implementing change, particularly virtually. I've talked about the obvious impact the global pandemic obviously had, not just on education as a whole, but also kind of the impact it had within society I suppose. I think it's safe to say it was pretty horrific for all in all contexts in life, I suppose, but, I think now kind of it's time we can reflect on that and it's really important to say that there are actually some good things that we can
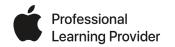
take from kind of the overwhelming public response I suppose. I feel like it is kind of paramount that we try and harvest that good stuff that came out of it and we kind of make sure that we take that forward in our everyday lives. So for me, something like the ability to work virtually makes that shift away from that more traditional face to face approach, I suppose is certainly one of those positives and the shift. So hopefully we can get into that. Before we do, just a quick reminder for our listeners that you can get involved in the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #I2PD, you can follow and tag myself and Paul on the Twitter handles… We'd obviously love to hear from you as we have done throughout the series, so please feel free to tweet us any of your questions and I'm sure we'll get back to you. So Paul, let's get going then. Now I'm assuming that very much like everyone during the pandemic, the work you did with schools pretty much ground to a halt. The schools are obviously moving to a home learning environment, and the obvious COVID restrictions in place. My first question I suppose is as a company, and obviously as a consultant, what was your initial response to the situation, I suppose, and how did you ensure that you could still support the schools and trusts in which you worked with?

Paul: That's a good question, because at the start of the pandemic, I was actually in school. I was still teaching, I was working freelance one day every couple of weeks I was going into various local schools around the Newcastle area, and I was doing face to face sessions and then as the pandemic slowly started to ramp up, obviously I learned a lot with my class and how our school was coping and how we were changing our ideas and our methods. I started full time as APLS in August 2020, and at that time everything shifted to online and at first it was a little bit strange as I'm sure you found as well. You know, there was not being able to see what's going on in a room and not being able to go over and support people who need that little bit of extra help. Everything just immediately shifted across to virtual. It was tough at first, as I'm sure you'll agree, changing the way you do something overnight to make it still have the same impact, but in a totally different way of actually getting that training out there. It takes some doing, but everything just changed and it just seemed to click. The more we did it, the more we learned about what worked and what didn't work and how we can have maximum impact. So as a company, we were entirely virtual up until the end of the second lockdown, and then it was all based on if schools would like face to face then that was fine. We could go in and do face to face, but yeah, many lessons to be learned and hopefully some of that I can share as well that I've I've had a big sort of impact for us.

Nick: It's great to hear you were able to continue supporting the schools and from a virtual point of view, I suppose for us as a company, it's all about, you know, what we could do to support all forms of educational settings, whether it be educators, businesses, moving into the fully virtual world and supporting them kind of in the use of cloud based technologies. Because as you rightly said, things kind of change overnight for some people. If you are kind of working in what I would refer to as the 'old way' of working, using local services and stuff. It was a big shift so we just offered support in any way, shape or form we could. Funnily enough, the schools in which we were already working with, you know, with the schools who probably needed less support, as they were already kind of further down the line I suppose in the digital transformation journey. So we've kind of reached far and wide and gave out free support via our online learning platform, AspirEd and then webinars to those who are most in need. So that was the kind of approach that we took but it is great to hear you were able to

support as well and the way in which you did. So as you've kind of alluded to, I've delivered many virtual sessions over the past 24 months or so, probably longer. I'm sure you have Paul, and it's fair to say that not everyone is comfortable with either delivering or taking part in online sessions, it's a much different dynamic. From your experience, how would you say, how do you build the connections or make participants feel comfortable when delivering remotely?
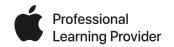
Paul: I think that's a really good point that you've got to build a connection because some times at the start as well with a lot of schools, when they were new to this, as you said, the schools that we supported, they didn't need as much help. It was new schools or schools that were just starting their journey and I guess it's all about making sure that everybody feels relaxed and open to engage. So the connections are vital. So at the start as with everybody, I learned as we were going along and then I kind of went back to my role in the classroom. I thought, well, what would I do? If I was in the classroom, and my class was coming in, what would I do? It was things that I'd always done, things like music at the start, just while waiting for everybody to join in. We'd play a little bit of music and welcome people as they come into the session. So as I was admitting people into the session, just saying their name, "Welcome, thanks for joining us." "If you've got any questions, please put them in the chat." As that progressed, I started to do things like put in a slide on with a question or a quiz or something a little a little bit topical and getting the staff who were on that session to engage before we started and then using the chat as well just to find out about the ways of those new members of staff that we hadn't worked with before. So tell me, you know your name, tell me your favourite app, tell me what your role is in school. Then just from there, just to make sure that everybody felt totally, totally comfortable. I know this is a bit of a daft one, but setting a clear outline about this is what we're going to do today, this is how we're going to do it. This is the agenda and this is what I expect from you. I'd like for you to leave your cameras on, for example, but turn the microphone off just so I can see those types of things. When it's time to turn them off, I'll let you know. Kind of because everybody knew what to expect over time, it just seemed to run a lot more smoothly.

Nick: You make some really good points. It's been a massive learning curve for everyone. Some of the things you referred to then I would now refer to or publicly referred to as Netiquette, you know, some of those things in terms of when we should mute, when should our cameras are on or off and so on and so forth. You make a really good point in terms of as the host of the session, I suppose trying to make it as relaxed as possible and that interactivity between the participants.So again, from a personal level, I'm sure many people do it on entry to, you know, whichever video conferencing tool in which you're using, trying to engage with as many different people as you can, just "Hello" and refer to the name or whatever it is. Then also I quite like the just to reiterate the slides in which you put up a leading question or something to interact. I quite often just like to try to find things out about people as well. What's your favourite biscuit? Chocolate Hobnobs seems to be one of the favourites at the moment!

Paul: It's always those little questions, things like what you having for your tea? They sound really daft but people always like to tell you what they're having or what you're doing when

you finish work tonight is another great one. You know, just little things just to kind of ease it so that if you are going to repeat the training, you've got something, you know, that little bit about them, just as we would with our pupils in our classrooms.So yeah, that makes all the difference for me.
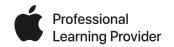
Nick: Yeah. So, that's kind of the first part done I suppose, the second part then, and possibly the hardest part of virtual delivery is making sure that you as the host of the session, that we involve and engage with all the staff or pupils or the participants of that remote session. So, I suppose what would your advice be here in terms of are there any tools in which you use to help facilitate the session? How would you encourage that engagement, I suppose from everyone to make sure they all feel a part?

Paul: I generally always start with any platform where I engage the ideas of the staff who are already in that session. So what I mean by that is sometimes I'll come with a pre a kind of pre-made outline of what I'm going to teach and there'll be far too much that I'm going to kind of get through in that session. If it's not relevant to those people on that session, I feel like it's not going to have the impact. So I always start with a padlet or a Jamboard or something where to just say, what are the challenges that they're facing? What are they looking to get from this session? Then from there I can gauge which parts of my session that I've planned are going to be most relevant so I can adapt it. So I'm not just doing a one size fits all. I always like to include the chat feature regularly. I always like to stop. I always like to have a slide with a question on based on what we've done, get an answer to that. If there's a lot of people in the room, just use the chat feature. If it's just a smaller session, we'll stop then we'll have a discussion. Anywhere I feel it needs to be engaged in and that you need to be, you need to be asking the questions and putting the emphasis as well back on whoever is part of your session. Because as I'm sure you're exactly the same as me, you've got a million ideas about where something could be used across the curriculum but to ask the question, where would you use this across the curriculum flips it back on the learner and the learner in that session then starts to take a bit of ownership. So I just feel like
just things like JamBoard, Padlet, breakout rooms, all those types of things just to get the conversation going so it's not one way is the best way to have impact, I feel.

Nick: You just mentioned a couple there but there are some great tools and third party applications in which you can use to really engage your audience, I suppose for whatever session it is your taking and I think it's really important and it's been something that we covered another episode in terms of the importance and the need to constantly fine tune and redesign those virtual sessions for the needs of your audience. Just as you would in the classroom, I suppose if you were delivering CPD to your colleagues. You know, we need to now understand and recognise that not all learners respond in the same way. So we need to adapt the content maybe, or we need to adapt that for the needs I suppose. Also it's all about making sure the content is relevant, isn't it? As you said, then we will have lots of ideas of how things can be done in the curriculum but it's about understanding that if you're doing a session to, I don't know, an English department, that the context is based
around the needs of that department and you're not worrying about another, particular area of the school sorts of I suppose no one really wants to sit I suppose at the end of a one hour, two hour webinar, depending on how long they are also not often taking part in any form of

activities as well. So the things in which you've talked about there just encourages people to engage. I suppose the term 'Death by PowerPoint' springs to mind, you know, people can just sit there on the end of a call and just sit there and just be read at and that's really difficult and challenging, isn't it?

Paul: Yeah, and I feel like as well, if they're not doing what you're doing in the session, then it's lost because me myself, if I'm just watching somebody I'll either become distracted or I'll try to follow along anyway. So I always think that we should be flipping it and there should be "I'm going to show you something I'd like you to have a play with it now as well" Rather than me just speak for an hour I'm going to give you 10 minutes to explore this and tell me what you found and if you want to share your results, just using the iCloud sharing link is often a great way then I can share it. Then I like them to get to chat with other people in the session as well, not just with me. So have a chat with some other people as well, find out their ideas. As long as everybody's engaged and doing something, the impact is usually so much more.
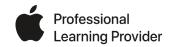
Nick: Well, it's interesting you say that because I suppose this leads me to my next question. You know, whilst we can do all of these great things to make sure everyone's engaged, I make the most, I suppose in all of my sessions, the best they can be. How do we ensure that the session is having an impact? What kind of, what things can we base that on?

Paul: I think asking questions. So we ask questions to gauge the feeling and, and the understanding. I think it's got to be, it's got to be as much as possible hands on and practical, a chance for them to share what they're doing as well. It's all very well us sharing great examples, but actually they need a chance to share their examples. So if, if it allows, they can share their screen, they can share files. I also think as well, the way for the biggest impact for me personally is there's an immediate takeaway that you can apply in your own setting or in your own lessons. So I often say that what we're going to do is I'm going to show you this based on what you've told me that you need We're going to get hands on but the idea is that when you're getting hands on, I'd like you to make something that you can immediately apply within the next couple of weeks in your classroom. So just having that impact just puts the ownership, although you're delivering the session and you're sharing your knowledge, actually, the ownership is on you to take something away and have impact with it. Then I'll be in touch in say a fortnight's time to find out how it's going. If you've got any questions, I will follow up with you. You don't have to follow up with me. I'm just going to sort of sort of check in and make sure that things are going how you want them to go, really. So, yeah, I think it's just got to be practical, got to be a chance to work as a team to collaborate, and there has to be something that they can take away and apply otherwise it's, it's not going to have as much impact.

Nick: Yeah, that's a really good thing. Everyone wants something to take away to use almost immediately. If they get an opportunity to do that within the session, then that's great and that's going to have a clear and obvious impact straightaway. Also, for me, the biggest thing is the discussion and engagement they have. So, provide an opportunity, as you said earlier, but how can this be utilised in your area? Whether it be like faculty or whatever. Then you can almost judge by the enthusiasm they have around it or yeah, I've got a great idea for this

or a great idea for this. Or even if they ask questions like this is the situation, can you help me to identify a way in which I can use this particular tool to solve a problem? So if they're engaged and they're already thinking with that then you'll obviously see that they've enjoyed the session and they can see a benefit to it. That's a kind of measure of impact as well isn't it I suppose.

Paul: It is, and I always finish with, again, just using the chat or a Padlet or a JamBoard or any other tool that I've gathered. I'll always like to find out three takeaways from a session and what are you going to try within the next two days. That just, you know, that helps me to make sure that my content is what they are looking for as well.
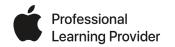
Nick: Yeah. So I suppose another question on this particular topic in terms of providing CPD virtually and so forth, and it's something I asked Doctor Steve Bunce when he joined me on a previous episode, and I'm interested to get your views on this Paul… As an APLS and obviously a well respected consultant, do you feel there's room for us to continue with this kind of online learning and this virtual approach, or should Apple Professional Learning return to a more traditional face to face offering now obviously post-pandemic? I think there's definitely room to expand this and grow. I think there's so many really positive things to come from the pandemic. I know that sounds a little bit daft, but the fact that if you get your virtual sessions right, you can have just as much impact in a one hour session online as you can face to face. I do strongly believe that we should be offering both and probably in the same schools in the same settings there's room for face to face with the same staff and there's room for virtual with the same staff. I believe that allows us to have a bit more impact because we can be on call a little bit easier. So, we can join sessions and we can get in and we can be up and down the country and help as many schools as we possibly can, which obviously is huge because, you know, sometimes you'd be travelling 3 hours to the next school. I think especially if you get it right and if you find a way that works and it has an impact, I think we should definitely be rolling with it.

Nick: I wholeheartedly agree, as I think I've said before, and you've kind of alluded to that if we can ensure we provide the high quality learning experiences whether it be for our learners or CPD to staff, I think these virtual deliveries can certainly play a major role going forward. I mean, you just pointed out a couple of things there in that sometimes it takes 3 hours or more to get to some school. You know, you could have delivered 3 1 hour sessions in our time. That's far more productive I suppose, that's just 1 thing out of a whole list of reasons as to why we could provide virtual learning experiences. Now then, of course the time's getting away with us quite a bit so as you all know, this podcast series is all about Apple Professional Learning and throughout the course of the series, we've been shining a light on some of the fantastic resources which are out there for all members of the Apple community to find and engage with. So, as someone who works with schools and educators on a daily basis Paul, are there any Apple resources which you would like to pinpoint and recommend our listeners check out to help them on their Apple Education journey, either from a personal point of view or from a whole school perspective?

Paul: Yes, I'm sure it's been mentioned before, but the Apple Teacher website is amazing. It's not just for those starting their journey. I regularly check in just to keep up to date with
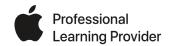
new resources and new ideas, and I would definitely recommend engaging with Apple Teacher. I definitely recommend looking at the Apple Teacher Portfolio as well. I think that's a fantastic place to start, but it's also a fantastic place to revisit and come back to. I'm sure these books have already been mentioned as well but a part of the Apple Leadership series, 'The Elements of Learning' is fantastic. Some of the ideas in there and the interactive widgets as well, where you can see how, and the interactive widgets as well, where you can see how, how different elements of learning look in different scenarios are really eye opening for schools, but also really help to inspire teachers and give them a good starting point. The 'Innovation in Schools' books just help you to get set up and helps you to think about how you can go through that with the technology in your school to really impact learning. So my three would be Apple Teacher, Elements of Learning and the Innovation in Schools books.

Nick: Perfect. There's some great recommendations there and as you said, not the first time that we mentioned on the series, but if you're listening and not only checked out firstly, the Apple Teacher Learning Center, please do so on there, you'll find a free, self paced professional learning program that offers pretty much unlimited access to learning materials and content for using technology within education. As Paul said, you learn new skills, you'll earn badges as you build towards that Apple teacher recognition. That could just be the start of your journey, I suppose, and then you can go upwards from there. As well as that, there's also some great resources on there to help you implement Apple Technologies within the classroom. Paul has also mentioned there, the Elements of Leadership series of books that are available on the Apple books. Again, as Paul mentioned, they're a great series of interactive books as part of the 'Leading Innovation' series. They're designed for education leaders and the books are particularly useful. It's all based on recent research based strategies for designing student learning experiences with iPad and Mac. So I thoroughly recommend the books for teachers and technology specialists to design, I suppose, innovative and effective learning experiences for Apple technology. So please go check them out. Paul. So as well as the great resources and you just named three, this podcast is also about looking at identifying some great educators out there, people like yourself. People for others in the Apple Education community to follow on Twitter and other social media outlets. It's probably no secret that Twitter is the world's biggest unofficial professional learning network, and it's a great way to connect with like minded people. Great way to magpie, lots of ideas and useful ideas to use in the classroom. It's because of that we've kind of made this kind of a regular feature, I suppose. So as a guest Paul, who would you like to recommend? Would it be a friend or more importantly, a top educator? So who are we going to shine the light on?

Paul: Right, I couldn't narrow this down, so I've chosen three, but I'll be quick on it and I have to echo that because Twitter, I wouldn't be in the role that I am today without being on Twitter and asking questions. The three that I would choose, I would choose Eion Hughes, who is an ADE. He is fantastic. He is a music and geography teacher from Ireland.He shares so many great resources and he's just shared a wonderful piece on his journey through the Apple Teacher portfolio. Definitely worth a follow! I would then second Matt Warne who is again he's another ADE and he's a computer specialist. I think it's RGS Worcester that he works at and he is constantly sharing lots of great computing tips and lots of great stories and impact from his own school. The final one would be Lindsey Stuttard who is also another

ADE from 2019 and she shares an awful lot of really interesting work on augmented reality and the role that it plays within school. She's particularly got a really great outlook on how we can support EYFS and there's so much to learn from those three people but the list is huge. The Apple Community is great on Twitter but those three really stand out.

Nick: Yes, some top names are on that list there Paul. All certainly worth a follow and as you said there are a huge amount of names we could drop in on these sessions and we're getting a good variety which is quite nice. So as I said please go check them out, give them a follow if you don't already do so. Now Paul, it's been great to chat with you today. and I massively appreciate you giving your time to join me on the podcast. I know you're a busy man, but we got the session in, which is really important, and we got some really good key points from it. Before I let you disappear, though, I wonder if you could leave our listeners with two key takeaways from today's session. So if you could give them two key takeaways, what would they be?

Paul: It would be everything that you do, as we do working with pupils, tailor it to the needs of your audience, whether that be students, staff, schools, find out what the schools need and what the schools are doing already, and build on it from there. I suppose the other thing would be, make sessions and make learning experiences interactive, engaging and there's something that you can immediately take away.

Nick: Perfect, two top tips! So, Paul, my thanks go to you, as always you've been great on today's session some really good tips and hints to help deliver our virtual sessions. So thank you very much for joining me.

Paul: You're very welcome. It's been a pleasure.

Nick: Great, thanks very much! For all those listening please don't forget, you can engage with anything we discussed today on Twitter using the hashtag #I2PD. We'd love to hear some of your thoughts, some of your experiences of your virtual sessions, so please let us know and don't forget to tag us. Until next time, take care. Thank you very much for listening. Bye now.