

Hello and welcome to the Approaching Schools Podcast. I'm Cerys Keneally, and I help children's activity providers to build key business relationships with schools and nurseries without having to use cold calling or stalking. I want to help you earn a more reliable and consistent income while building your social impact and enriching children's lives with ease. So join me as I take you on a journey, and let's make a positive difference together.

Hello and welcome to another episode of approaching schools. So today, we are diving into one of the most powerful yet often underused strategies for getting more pupils into your extracurricular clubs, for boosting your numbers in your community classes, and for turning schools into long term partners, and this is all about high impact school assemblies. So if you're a former teacher or activity provider looking to grow your presence in schools and secure more repeat bookings, then this is the episode for you, because we're going to cover how to structure in assembly that grabs attention and gets students excited. The secret to turning that excitement into real world, sign ups and long term partnerships, how to use assemblies as a stepping stone for increasing your community class bookings. And finally, how to retain pupils and keep schools rebooking you term after term. So let's get started.

First of all, I would love to chat to you about why school assemblies are one of the most powerful tools for growth in your business, and will continue to be in 2025 and there are reasons why assemblies work so well for children's activity providers who want to grow their businesses in schools and nurseries, because assemblies give you a direct captive audience of hundreds of pupils at once. So whether this is a key stage one assembly, a Key Stage Two assembly, a whole school assembly, maybe one in a secondary school, you are going to have lots and lots of children in front of you at once who are all very excited to learn from this visitor, this intriguing visitor, that has come to their school to give an assembly that is, quite frankly, a bit more fun than probably the usual assemblies that they are used to in their school. Sorry, teachers and they this really worked for me, actually. This really, really worked for me when I was growing my dance business, because I was able to just spend 20 minutes of my time demonstrating what I do to hundreds of children all at once. Okay, it was far more powerful than going in and delivering to individual classes, because pretty much every child in the school got to experience a little snapshot of what I had to offer, and it created a real buzz around the school that day. And the great thing for me was often that most class teachers were in the assembly with me, and very often one of the senior leadership team was there to introduce me and say goodbye at the end.

So it was fantastic proof to be able to get all those teachers and senior leaders in with me at once. Because when you deliver a curriculum demo, you might just have a class teacher or a TA, and then you've got to work hard on strategies for sharing the experience with a member of a senior leadership team, whereas with an assembly, they might already be in there with you, witnessing exactly what you do. And this worked really well for my team as well, actually, because, from my point of view, send in UVA freelancers in to deliver assemblies on my behalf. When I was growing my team in multiple locations, one of the things I found was, well, you know, I didn't have to pay them for hours and hours of their work that I didn't know whether it was going to convert into paid work for me for them, because, actually, they only needed to go in for those 20 minutes, and I could pay them accordingly. And they were very happy to go and do it, because they could get on with the rest of their day afterwards. So it worked really, really well for my team, as well as a demonstration. And of course, those schools that converted, or those clubs that got more students in, they would directly benefit from as well. So unlike trying to cold pitch, which, as we know. Doesn't work. Assemblies, let school see the value of what you deliver in action.

Now, in the approaching schools Academy, we are actively building a community of conscientious communicators, so we don't actually ask for teachers time without offering some form of value first. So this is a fantastic way of being able to offer that, because we know how busy teachers are. I'm going to tell you in a story, a moment about how I was such a busy teacher, and I know so many of my clients who were also former teachers resonate with this story that it was actually very difficult to even have your basic needs met sometimes, you know, and actually, if teachers are so busy that even their basic needs as humans are not being met, then how dare we try to take up their time talking about our business if actually, we haven't offered them something of value first?

So one of the ways that assemblies and offering assemblies as one of your demos, can actually really help teachers is to literally give them a comfort break. So for me, when I was a overworked, busy primary school teacher, I was convinced that the person who did the assembly rota was a different person to the one who did the playground duty Rota, because I would often find that both my assembly that I needed to deliver as a class teacher and my playground duty fell on the same day, which meant I had no break until lunchtime, and it was a long, long Morning to not even be able to use the loop. And you know, and teachers have got so many other things that they want to do in their break times. You know, they want to be putting up displays, they want to be marking books. They want to be assessing children.

There's so many different things that they want to use their breaks for, rather than actually having a comfort break for themselves as well. So if you had offered me, and in fact, this did happen when I was a primary teacher as well, because I was art coordinator, if you'd have offered me the opportunity to take my assembly off my hands that day so they could either have a comfort break or go and do some of the extra work that I was expected to do as a teacher, I would have bitten your hand off. And as an art coordinator, I do remember somebody wanting to come in and deliver an assembly and give out some flyers about their half term art workshops. So this is really, really good for you as a demo, to have that opportunity of potentially having senior leaders and even perhaps lots of class teachers in the room with you, all at once, you're not giving anything away, either that you would normally sell or normally expect to be paid for. So you're not giving one of your services away for free for this demonstration, unless assemblies is something that you would ordinarily sell. So it is a fantastic option for activity providers, for lots of reasons. You haven't got to give up lots of your time, and it's a really low cost marketing strategy.

It is your time that is costing more than anything else, and you get to create an amazing emotional connection with the pupils. Pupils really remember engaging presenters? I want you to cast your mind back to a school assembly where you were a student. And can you remember how engaging those visitors were? And can you remember how effortless it seems? Well, here's the thing, it's an exciting and powerful growth tool for you in your business. When I started adopting this strategy, I can recall one time when I went in to deliver just literally to years three and four, so lower key stage two, and I gave them some literature about my community classes, which I'll talk about in just a moment, when we talk about sort of boosting numbers and converting sign ups from your assemblies. But actually I ended up with 40 pupils in my half term workshops as a result, and then I converted 20 of those children into a 12 week term in a brand new location in my dance school.

So this was a really powerful strategy, and it worked so much quicker for boosting numbers in my community, classes in the local area than using social media, for example. And one of my approaching schools Academy

members uses an assembly now to boost her numbers in her club every term. If she needs to, you need to kind of think about the objective for your demonstration, if it's to, you know, just to get a school to sign up, fine, I would only offer one of those, you know, one demo, and then they get to decide, yes or no, are they going to work with you further? But actually, if your objective is to boost numbers in your clubs every term, and it's a low cost way of doing. That. Or if your objective is to get some more children into your community classes to make sure you can continue paying the hall higher and make a nice profit yourself, then you might be happy to give up 20 minutes of your time to deliver an assembly every year, or potentially even every term, if that is your objective. So one of my approach schools and Academy members does this regularly for her modern foreign languages. So I literally remember when coaching her on the different ways that she could employ some practical strategies that were going to be really fun and engaging for her assembly. And now she's a total assembly convert and uses it as a strategy, which is fantastic to see, because people do worry that they're going to have to cancel their clubs at the beginning of the term. If they're, they're, you know, their loyal following has now left school and gone on to Big School, for example. And assemblies are a fantastic way to just boost those numbers, especially with the new children coming up into different year groups each year as well. So my key takeaway for you is, if you're not using school assemblies as a lead generation tool in your business, you really are missing out on a huge opportunity.

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But here's the thing you're going to want to know how to structure an assembly that converts so I actually have a five part assembly framework, and it starts with a hook. So you want to think about how you might start with a question, a story or a surprising fact to grab attention, because you want to think about ways that you can really draw the children's attention in and get them thinking about your topic at the same time. So I think one of the things that puts people off delivering assemblies is they don't know what to deliver. They don't know how to structure it. They don't know what to say. The idea of having to speak in front of lots of children puts them off. But actually you want to let your activity do the talking. You could start by sharing a short, personal or relevant story, because that's really going to connect them to your topic. Because remember that saying facts, tell, stories sell. This will make you being there really relevant.

And remember you need to be relevant in 2025 if you want to sell in schools. So you need to have that kind of a really interactive moment where your activity does the talking for you, and you want to engage students with a quick activity or a demo or a challenge. Now, if you're worried about public speaking, let this activity do the talking. And you do need to consider your space with this. So you want to think about something that's going to engage the whole school potentially, but you might have limited space of the whole school or in with you all at one time. So for me, when I used to go and deliver interactive street dance assemblies, I would teach tutting. So tutting is hand gestures, essentially, and this meant that we didn't need lots and lots of space. But what we would do instead is, whilst the whole school would be practising some tutting, guided by me at the front, we would then also get children up to the front of the class to demonstrate bigger moves. And this was a great tool for behaviour management. So one of the things providers worry about is that it's essentially like teaching a really, really big class. And you know, for some of my yoga members that I work with, for example, they're only perhaps used to delivering sessions to classes of up to 12, something like that. So the prospect of then

delivering a demonstration in front of lots of children can be a bit daunting, but from a behaviour management point of view, when you're saying I'm looking for some volunteers, and I'm going to choose people who are sitting beautifully, all of a sudden, you have got hundreds of beautiful sitters in front of you. So it's a great behaviour management tool, as much as it is a crowd pleaser, and it will help you safely use the space by actually getting children up to demonstrate some of the larger moves that you want to use as examples. But there are lots of things you could do.

So if somebody was wanting to deliver an assembly for yoga, for the whole school activity, you might do some mindful breathing exercises, for example, and then you would get children up to demonstrate some of the bigger poses, if it's dance, yes, something that involves hand gestures like tutting I mentioned for street dance, followed by getting children up to demonstrate some bigger moves with you music.

Now one of my lovely members of the approaching schools and nurseries. Group on Facebook suggested body percussion the other day as an assembly strategy, and this was used in the context of dance, but actually be great for music as well. So if you haven't got hundreds of instruments to be able to hand out, and it would be a logistical nightmare get them to do body percussion as a whole school, and then get the instruments out at the front for selected children. And so there's so many things you can do here, and you don't have to be a physical activity provider either. You might do a practical science demonstration at the front. You might do a practical computing demonstration at the front. There are so many different things that you might do. And of course, for the storytellers and the performing artists, you will have lots of things up your sleeves for delivering a highly interactive and engaging assembly through storytelling and performance as well. So my takeaway is that you really want to be able to clearly explain how your ongoing program is then going to benefit the pupils. So get them excited. Okay, get them excited to have more of this. They understand that this is just a little taste of what's yet to come potentially. And then you want to think about your objective for your call to action. So make it really, really easy for the pupils to sign up and for the teachers there to support you.

So one of the really easy things you can do for great social proof is get them all to put their hands up if they would like to continue on with you beyond the assembly, because lots of them will put their hands up, and then the ones that haven't will get FOMO when they see everybody else putting up their hands, and they'll be putting up their hands too, and it's great. So I should prove in front of the teachers so that when the key decision maker asks them, you know, how did the children respond to this in assembly? Do you think it's something that would get a lot of engagement if we put it on the timetable, and they'd say, yes, they all put their hands up at the end of the assembly because they wanted to continue. So at the end of your assembly, you want to be telling the pupils exactly what to do next.

So if this is to boost club sign ups, you want to say, if you want to join our club, grab a sign up form from your teacher, or scan the QR code on this flyer that's going out in your book bags. Or you want to literally say to the younger children, take this flyer out of your book bag and show this code or this link to your grown up as soon as you get onto the playground and tell them how to sign up. Because I can only take however many of you on a first come first serve basis, and there's hundreds of you here, one of the things that I used to do, also to encourage sign ups in my local community classes, is I would give every child a sticker, get the teachers to support you with this. You could hand 30, you know, you could put the stickers into batches of 30 and get the teachers to hand them out. For example, children love stickers, but on my stickers was a call to action, and it would say something like, mum dad asked me what I did today with a link to my website booking form for my

local community classes or for the older children. Perhaps you could do vouchers to join you at your dance school, for example. So as I say, this was huge for me, because I got 40 children into a half term workshop, and then I could convert at least 20 of them. Could have converted more, but 20 was actually my limit for that ongoing community class at the time. And this was a brand new location. And after this, I was an assembly convert. You know, I did this a lot, so this became an ongoing strategy in my dance business. So really, really think about what you can take with you on the day to increase those sign ups. Now I want to talk to you about converting assemblies into those sign ups and community class bookings, because here's what most providers get wrong. They deliver an amazing assembly and then they don't follow up.

Now here's the thing, schools will not chase you. You do need a system in place. So if your objective is actually to get repeat bookings from the school, ask for a meeting with the school on the same day. If that's your intention, if your intention is to get children to sign up with you at your local classes or at an existing club, take sign up material with you. Okay, if your intention is to get this as a club on the timetable, then yeah, you're also going to want to book a conversation in with one of the decision makers. So here's my three step follow up formula for this. You want to email a school within 24 hours, thank them. Highlight what the engagement was, and include the sign up details again, because they might put it in their parent mail now, for example, which is their email newsletter, you want to follow up with the teachers, so at the time, you want to give them resources they can share with the students. So we've mentioned. And things like flyers, letters in book bags, vouchers, stickers on uniforms. And you want to create some urgency, but this is genuine, okay. This is because, genuinely, from a safeguarding point of view, spots are limited, and you can perhaps only take 20, for example, and there will be a deadline for sign ups, but it's a very natural deadline because the club is due to start, and you don't want them to miss out, or a special day is coming up. So there's a very genuine reason for that urgency. And again, it's about being conscientious communicators.

Don't just give a deadline for no reason, but the urgency is that your capacity is very genuine from a safeguarding point of view. Can only take a certain number of children on a first come first serve basis, and they will have seen that there were hundreds of other children being given this opportunity in the assembly. So it's very natural, genuine urgency, and you might want to offer a trial session, but really, I don't think you necessarily have to, to be honest with you, that was their trial session, and you probably won't have to offer one as part of the the ongoing commitment after that, because your assembly was so engaging. So I want to talk a little bit about retaining pupils now and securing repeat bookings from schools, because you really want to be able to turn one assembly into multiple bookings, and schools will rebook you if they see the long term value. So you really need to think about how you're going to offer a long term relationship with the school and its students, and you need to think about how you're going to keep the relationship alive after that first booking. So what could you do? You could offer multi term packages instead of one off booking.

So this is a huge eye opener for my approaching schools Academy members, when they realize that selling a long term contract can be just as easy as selling a one off workshop, because where does the value genuinely lie for a school? Yes, schools are looking for value for money, but that doesn't mean cheap. That means value, okay? And there's a lot of value in you going in and seeing every single child in every single year group throughout the year and providing progression for learning, far more value than going in and doing a one off for enrichment or a topic hook, this is what we teach you to do in the academy, with examples from other providers and package templates and strategies for your pricing. You might want to use student progress tracking to show the impact. So you might want to use things like certificates or some kind of rewards in your clubs, or

maybe you even offer progress reports to teachers. One of my approaching schools Academy members does this, and it's hugely valuable. It really forges amazing relationships with the teachers. It embeds you as a sort of recognized part of school life, but it's great for saving teachers time and effort when they're looking for something additional to say in their report writing and in their end of term assessments. And maybe you're going to like, run some seasonal or theme sessions to keep the pupils engaged all year round, because at the end of the day, the more the schools see you throughout the year, the more likely they are to just go ahead and book a long term package after that, and you could use your assemblies to boost numbers at the start of a year, or even the start of every term, which is one of the strategies my clients do.

So one of my providers I worked with started with a single after school club, and when she started introducing themed monthly workshops within a term, the school booked her for a year long program, because they really saw the value in it. They were actually waiting for the younger children to settle in, and then they booked her for the rest of the year. Because the schools that rebook you are the ones that see consistent value, so you want to make it really easy for them to say yes by offering structured, long term programs, because this is where there's actually more value for the school. Because I firmly believe that the most valuable provider is going to be the one that is ultimately going to have the biggest impact in 2025 and as we always say, in the approaching schools Academy, when they see the value, they will find the budget. So what have we talked about today? If you want to maximize the impact of your school assemblies, here's what you can do. Use a structured assembly framework to engage pupils and school staff. Have a clear, compelling call to action to turn that excitement into sign ups, tell the children what to do when they go home that day, follow up quickly and make it easy for schools to share your sign up information with parents and offer long term value to schools so they see you as a key partner, not just a visitor.

Now if you found this episode helpful, I would love to invite you into my brand new. Course. It's called assembly impact, and this is the only time this year that I will be teaching this course live. So here's what we'll be covering. In week one, we'll be talking about crafting your high impact assembly, and you will be given the my five step assembly structure for maximum engagement. And I will be sharing with you how you can really align your message with school priorities, and you'll be getting bonus resources, just like my assembly template. And week two, we're going to be talking all about delivering with confidence. So I'm going to be training you how to capture attention in the first 30 seconds of your assembly and how audience interaction techniques are great for your engagement, and tons of examples of what you can do, and I'm going to be including my engagement cheat sheet for different age groups as well. In week three, we're going to be talking all about how you can turn your assemblies into sign ups. So the CTA formula for increasing sign ups, how to get teachers and school staff to support your programs and post assembly conversion email template for you so you can get going and implement it straight away. Week four is all about booking more assemblies and scaling your reach.

So I'm going to give you the exact school outreach blueprint you will need to use to get more more bookings, how to overcome objections and secure repeat bookings. Because if demos haven't been working for you might not have a demo problem. You might have a sales problem. So we're going to talk about that too. If you don't yet have a school sales ecosystem like the one we teach in the approaching schools Academy, it might not be your demo that is the issue, and I'm going to be sharing with you a school outreach email swipe file so you can get started straight away. This isn't going to be another course where you just learn theory. It's practical, battle tested strategies that we are going to help you to implement, and there are going to be some extra implementation bonuses. For those of you who are able to pay in full, you will get exclusive access to a

WhatsApp group with your fellow participants for extra accountability, inspiration and support and a Q and A with me five weeks after the course has ended, for additional accountability questions and to help you take action in your business. So we start on the fourth of March. I would love to see you there. Go to the link in the show notes below this episode to join us, and that's it for today. Come and let me know what you think about this in the approaching schools and nurseries with Cerys Kenealy Facebook group, and I will speak to you soon.

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