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Morning Assembly to Employability: School to Work Transition

1. Introduction



Communication stands as a foundational employability skill and a critical core competency required for academic success and future career progression. Yet, many students experience limited opportunities to cultivate effective communication abilities. Challenges in self-expression may arise from constrained exposure, weak reading competencies, poor pronunciation, and limited opportunities for public speaking. Such learners may consequently face disadvantages in higher education and future employment settings where effective communication is highly valued.

This raises a central question for schools: Where can such repeated practice happen within the existing school structure? The morning assembly provides a practical answer. It brings students together, provides an audience, follows a predictable schedule and creates regular opportunities to speak, listen, think and take responsibility. Yet an assembly can remain largely ceremonial if students simply repeat prepared material without understanding it or if participation is restricted to a small group of confident performers.

The experience at Klorofeel School demonstrates how an existing routine can be transformed when its developmental potential is recognised and intentionally structured. What began as

preparation for speeches, facts and quizzes evolved into a pedagogical model for developing communication, critical thinking, collaboration and responsibility.

2. Identifying the Need

Students enter school with different levels of exposure to language, reading, public speaking and social interaction. When the intervention began, several recurring difficulties were visible:

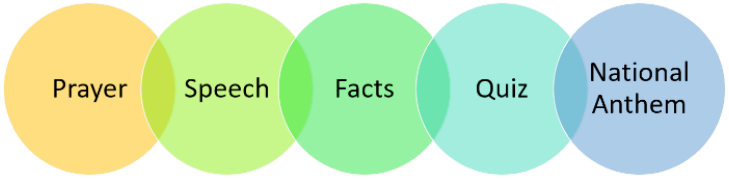
- **Speaking Challenges:** Many students were uncomfortable introducing themselves or talking about familiar subjects. They might know individual words such as "sing", "dance" or "draw", but connecting them into complete sentences was difficult. Speaking before a large group caused nervousness and reluctance, with many preferring to hold a sheet rather than make eye contact.
- **Reading Competency:** Reading was often limited to word decoding rather than understanding the meaning and communicating the text effectively. Students stopped frequently, mispronounced unfamiliar vocabulary and read without appropriate pace, stress, pauses or modulation.
- **Writing Limitations:** Most students struggled to produce three connected sentences independently or organise ideas into a logical structure. Generating content and selecting relevant information required substantial scaffolding.
- **Thinking and Understanding:** Students could often reproduce information when it was provided, but had fewer opportunities to question it, identify relevant ideas, explain meaning or connect information to a purpose.

These observations indicated that communication could not be developed through isolated grammar exercises or occasional competitions. Students needed regular opportunities to use language, think about information and communicate for a real purpose before a live audience.

3. The Beginning of the Assembly Intervention



The Assembly format developed around:



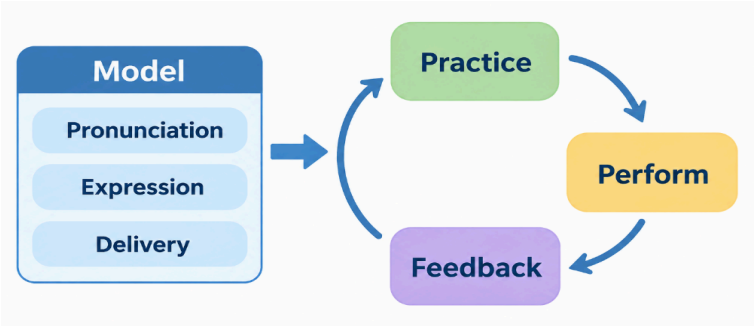
The following three principal components were also used strategically according to students' existing abilities. The **speech** was generally assigned to students who demonstrated stronger speaking skills and a higher level of confidence. The **facts** segment was given to students with a moderate level of confidence, providing an intermediate opportunity to practise speaking before an audience. The **quiz** was often assigned to students who could read well but were less confident in spontaneous speaking. Such students could initially read the questions from paper while being guided on how to listen to and handle responses from the audience. This allowed participation to be matched with a student's current level of readiness while creating opportunities for gradual development.

The preparation revealed that written material was only the starting point. Students needed explanations of vocabulary and content, pronunciation correction, and repeated practice with pauses, stress, expression and modulation.

The process was not simply:

Prepare → Perform

but:



4. From Activity to Pedagogical Method

A primary realisation was that teacher-driven preparation could not remain the final stage. If the teacher wrote every speech, selected every fact and prepared every quiz, students might perform successfully but remain dependent on the teacher for content.

Students were given topics and asked to prepare their own speeches and articles. The assembly coordinators continued to review content and guide preparation, but students increasingly retained ownership of their work.

This introduced **purpose and audience** into the writing process and provided a natural context for critical thinking.

Students had to consider three basic questions:

What information is relevant?

Why is it important to the topic or audience?

How should it be organised and communicated?

These questions became particularly important with the emergence of generative AI. Some students began bringing AI-generated speeches and articles. Although the material could be grammatically polished, students did not always understand what they were presenting.

The focus therefore shifted from:

“Is this speech well written?”

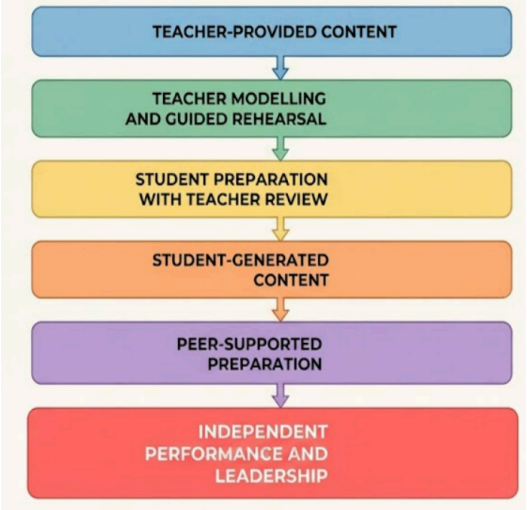
to:

“Does the student understand it and communicate it?”

Students were asked to explain unfamiliar vocabulary and demonstrate understanding of their content. Producing text may be increasingly easy through digital tools; understanding, evaluating and communicating that text remain essential.

5. Designing for Gradual Independence

The progression can be represented as:



The process demonstrated that scaffolding should function as a bridge towards independence rather than a permanent support.

6. Peer Learning and Emerging Leadership

As students became more experienced, they began supporting one another. Stronger speakers could model sentences, help peers practise, explain vocabulary or assist with pronunciation and spelling.

The process also created opportunities for leadership beyond formal positions.

Quiz participants asked questions and responded to the audience. Students involved in special programmes rehearsed, coordinated and performed together.

These situations also required critical thinking. Students had to understand a problem, decide what support was needed and determine how to respond.

7. The Assembly as a Multi-Skill Environment



The **speech** develops public speaking, pronunciation, fluency, expression, organisation, and confidence.

The **facts** segment exposes students to information and vocabulary while requiring clear communication and relevant identification.

The **quiz** develops questioning, listening, and responsiveness. Conductors must communicate clearly, listen to responses, and react appropriately.

For the **audience**, the process is active. Students listen to speeches and facts, retain information, and answer quiz questions. This develops active listening, comprehension, recall, and respect for peers.

The quiz provides a simple critical thinking context: students identify what they hear, understand why it is relevant, and decide how to use that information.

Introductions practice self-presentation. Anchoring develops sequencing, audience awareness, and responsibility. Special programmes like dramas, skits, and songs require collaboration, rehearsal, memory, coordination, and performance.

The assembly offers multiple entry points for diverse strengths. Uncomfortable speakers may join a song, skit, or quiz, gradually moving to other public communication forms.

8. Evidence of Student Development

The changes observed over time are based primarily on sustained teacher observation, student participation, performance and written work.

Speaking and confidence

Most students can now introduce themselves appropriately. Many speak for one to two minutes or longer, and participation increasingly occurs without extensive persuasion.

Many students can speak without paper, maintain eye contact and continue even after momentarily forgetting a line. Earlier, forgetting a sentence could cause a student to stop completely; repeated experience has helped students understand how public-speaking works even when the performance is not perfect.

Reading

Repeated reading during preparation has contributed to improvement in pronunciation, pausing, expression and voice modulation. Students who initially struggled with prepared texts have become more comfortable with unfamiliar words and longer passages.

Writing

More students are now able to prepare speeches and articles independently. An observable increase of approximately 20% has been noted in students demonstrating this ability; this is a professional estimate rather than the result of a formal statistical study.

Vocabulary and understanding

Students encounter vocabulary through speeches, facts, articles and other material and are increasingly expected to understand the words they use. When they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, they are encouraged to find its meaning and return prepared.

Critical Thinking

Students consider **what** information is relevant, **why** it matters and **how** it should be organised, explained or presented. They practise these processes while researching topics, preparing speeches, answering questions, responding to feedback and dealing with unexpected situations.

The use of AI has made this particularly significant. Students are increasingly required to understand and evaluate material rather than accept polished content at face value.

Active Listening and Audience Participation

The audience has become an active part of the learning environment. Students listen to speeches, facts, questions, announcements and performances, then respond when required.

The quiz is the clearest example: students must listen, identify relevant information, retain it and formulate a response. They also follow the interaction between the quiz conductor and their classmates.

Effective communication therefore involves both expression and reception. Students are developing not only the ability to speak but also to listen, process information and respond appropriately.

9. From “Reading Well” to “Communicating Independently”

One of the clearest developments has been the changing understanding of success.

A successful participant is increasingly expected to:

- understand the material;
- identify relevant information;
- organise ideas;
- communicate clearly;
- use appropriate pronunciation and expression;
- reduce dependence on paper;
- maintain composure when something goes wrong;
- respond to questions;
- accept responsibility; and
- support others.

This represents a movement from performance to agency.

Can the student read it?

Can the student say it?

Can the student understand it?

Can the student identify what matters?

Can the student decide how to communicate it?

Can the student respond when the situation changes?

Can the student help someone else?

Can the student lead?

This progression connects directly with the school-to-work transition. Professional environments require individuals to understand information, communicate it, respond to changing circumstances, collaborate and take responsibility rather than merely reproduce information.

10. Student Voices: What Changed for Them?

Student reflections provide an important perspective on the impact of the assembly.

One student described progressing from assembly participant to eventual leader. The student associated the experience with increased confidence and the ability to manage situations under pressure. Even after changing schools, the student reported speaking confidently before large audiences.

Another student described initial nervousness about public speaking and fear of mistakes. Unfamiliar words and pronunciation difficulties caused discouragement, but supportive peers led to a successful performance, shifting the student's understanding of mistakes.

Some students recalled being intimidated by speaking before hundreds of peers. Initial attempts caused memorised lines to disappear, making pronunciation difficult. With repeated opportunities, the podium became a place of confidence, teaching that success is about composure and communication rather than flawless performance.

11. Communication Skills and School-to-Work Transition

The school-to-work transition requires more than academic qualifications. Students eventually enter environments where they must introduce themselves, present information, listen to others, respond to questions, evaluate information, handle unexpected situations, collaborate and take responsibility.

The assembly provides age-appropriate opportunities to practise these behaviours.

A student introducing herself/himself is practising self-presentation.

A student organising a speech is practising structured communication.

A student researching and explaining information is practising information handling and critical thinking.

A student responding during a quiz is practising listening and responsiveness.

A student continuing after forgetting a line is practising composure.

A student accepting a last-minute responsibility is practising adaptability.

A student helping a peer is practising collaboration and leadership.

A student evaluating AI-generated material is developing digital judgement alongside communication.

These are not separate employability lessons. They are skills embedded within authentic school participation.

12. What Teachers Can Learn

Teachers can learn the following things:

1. Communication requires repetition. Students cannot be expected to become confident speakers through a single annual competition.
2. Scaffolding should be progressive. Scripts, modelling and extensive rehearsal may be necessary initially but should gradually give way to independent preparation and performance.
3. Student work should not always be replaced with perfect teacher work. An imperfect student speech can provide a more valuable learning opportunity than a flawless speech written entirely by an adult. Correction should improve the work while preserving student ownership.
4. Students need opportunities to respond to uncertainty. Real communication is unpredictable, so students should encounter situations requiring them to recover, answer, clarify, adapt or continue.

13. What School Management Can Learn

Schools have numerous activities that are often treated primarily as routines—assemblies, clubs, competitions, sports, celebrations and events. Each can become a learning environment when its developmental purpose is identified.

“Has the activity been conducted?”

to:

“What are students learning through the activity?”

The assembly developed because its structure was not treated as fixed. Expectations changed as students developed. Such processes require reasonable teacher autonomy, wider teacher involvement, repeated student participation and recognition of different forms of leadership.

14. The Evolution of the Teacher's Role

The development of the assembly changed the nature of the teacher's role.

Initially, the teacher ensured successful performance by writing content, explaining vocabulary, modelling pronunciation and rehearsing with students. As the assembly evolved, the role shifted towards creating opportunities for students to assume responsibility.

Model → Coach → Reviewer → Facilitator → Observer → Designer of Learning Opportunities

A teacher does not become less involved when students become independent; the nature of the involvement changes.

The assembly therefore developed through an ongoing cycle:

Observe → Identify Need → Adapt Practice → Implement → Observe Again

This transformed a routine activity into a structured pedagogical method.

15. Challenges and Continuing Development

The intervention has not resulted in identical outcomes for every student.

Some students continue to need paper support. Spontaneous speaking remains difficult for some, and writing still requires grammatical and structural correction. Storytelling and debate require further development, while interviews have not yet been systematically explored as part of the assembly process.

AI also presents an ongoing challenge. Students can produce sophisticated-looking content without necessarily developing independent ideas. Teacher questioning, content understanding and evaluation therefore remain important.

The model also demands considerable teacher preparation, checking and feedback. Its sustainability depends on sharing responsibility among teachers, student leaders and peer trainers.

16. Conclusion

The assembly provided repeated opportunities for preparation, practice, performance, listening, feedback, and responsibility. Over time, the process moved from teacher-generated content to student-generated work, and from participation to leadership.

The most important development was that students became independent communicators and purposeful thinkers. Through preparing, questioning, listening, responding, and evaluating information, they developed critical thinking alongside communication.

Pedagogical innovation does not always require new programmes or specialised infrastructure. Sometimes it requires looking differently at an existing practice and asking what learning it can produce.

For teachers, the lesson is to provide repeated opportunities, scaffold progressively, preserve student ownership, and encourage critical thinking. For leadership, the lesson is to recognise that routine activities become powerful developmental environments when educational purpose is intentional.

The morning assembly can move beyond being a mere ceremonial beginning. It can become a structured space where students learn to read with understanding, write with purpose, speak with confidence, think critically, listen actively, collaborate, and take responsibility.

The journey from morning assembly to employability begins in everyday moments when a student stands before others, finds the words, communicates an idea, and discovers: **"I can do this."**