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Why don’t students listen? Reflecting on teaching interventions focusing on student engagement with feedback and co-construction of marking criteria

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We often find ourselves writing the same points into students’ feedback, things that would be easy to avoid or that they should keep doing when completing assignments to get better marks. ‘Don’t include initials for in-text references, avoid reliance on a single source, ensure you’re answering the question by referring back to it’ etc. So, the question naturally arises, ‘Why don’t they listen?’. Completing my PGCTHE, one of my action research projects aimed to explore the effects of using a combined structured framework for student engagement with feedback to help them identify their strengths, needs, opportunities, and barriers (SNOB analysis by Salford University) when it comes to their work, and use these points to create action plans to improve in the future (Phil Race’s feedback action plan). The first project identified understanding the criteria as a barrier to taking feedback on board, and so the second teaching intervention aimed to demystify the rubrics by co-constructing the marking criteria with students to make it more accessible. The aim was to help students better meet the criteria and acquire those higher order skills on Bloom’s taxonomy that are set out as outcomes while completing their work. This approach of working with students as partners and applying student derived rubrics and marking criteria for assessment for learning has become increasingly popular over the past years, but its success is still debated as it can also promote strategic, superficial learning. This presentation will briefly summarise both projects that I conducted in my year 1 cohort in education and childhood studies; it will touch on the underlying literature and pedagogical approach and will discuss the results that came from the evaluation using online surveys and focus groups for methodological triangulation. I will be joined by two of my students, Jess and Anwen, who participated in these projects to share their experiences and reflect on the impacts to provide a comprehensive view on these interventions.

