Rubrics are important tools, to evaluate student assignments and presentations accurately and efficiently. According to Andrade “an instructional rubric is a one- or two-page document that describes varying levels of quality, from excellent to poor, for a specific assignment. It is used with a relatively complex assignment such as a long-term project, an essay, or a research paper. Its purposes are to give students informative feedback about their works in progress and detailed evaluations of their final products”1. Rubrics usually describe the level of quality, complex student reasoning and performances; they also provide more than a mechanism for consistent grading, and help students to plan how to perform better the next time2.

Evaluators should utilize a fair and well defined approach to effectively analyze students’ knowledge and skill. The level of grading in rubrics is usually listed in different columns. There will be an uppermost level and a lowest level, with different levels falling in between these two. The practice adopted when using most of the rubrics is for the level to start at the value 1 and the higher levels to have increasing values.

An example would illustrate the approach widely used. If an instructor wishes to evaluate the seminar presentation skills, there are different domains that need to be evaluated, and the assessment in each domain will be based on many statements. Assume that in a particular domain there are ten statements, each having five levels. The lowermost level has been assigned the value of 1 and the highest level 5 (i.e. the values go as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). In this situation, the minimum score for a student will be 10 and the maximum will be 50. Here the student who scores the lowest will get a score of 20%, because the evaluator is forced to choose the minimum available score of 20%.

In the second situation, let us assume that there are five levels and the lowermost level is zero and the highest level is 4 (i.e. 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4). Here, if a student is extremely poor in all aspects, he or she will get a score of zero and the student who is extremely good will get a score of 100%. The evaluator now has the freedom to give a score that falls between 0% and 100%.

All rubrics, therefore, should always start with the lowest level as 0 instead of 1.

References