PEER ASSESSMENT TOOLS SERIES: AVOIDING SCORING ERRORS
SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR STUDENTS AT UOPEOPLE

Assessments are a common area where our human tendencies can appear and defy the main outcomes we should be after: learning and helping others learn at UoPeople.

We are all human, thus, we are susceptible to making errors when assessing the work of other students. These errors are reflective of our unconscious bias that we all might have. If you think that you do not have any bias, please think again as we all are likely to have it. To test your own bias please visit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/research/

If you still think that these errors do not apply to you, please consider the following statements: Acknowledgement means advancement. Denial could mean minimizing not only your learnings, but also those around you. Change might be difficult when we attempt it on our own, but it becomes easier when we get the support from our community. UoPeople community needs you and vice versa. Why? To help you **learn more, learn quicker and embrace your success. Please do your part by continuing to develop peer assessment skills.**

This is an awareness building educational tool. Please use it by reading it, writing your honest responses in the space provided and reviewing them as often as needed. You are also encouraged to use the findings in reaching out to others to discuss issues of feedback.	**Describe and list:** **1. Last instance I made this error.** **2. What will I do to avoid it next time?**
1. **Individualism in a Collective Environment Error** Which statement do you agree with? A. I learn and study for myself (*my marks, my success*). B. I learn and study for myself and my community. *Students at UoPeople are part of my present educational community, thus, at minimum; I consciously help those with whom I study and whose work I assess by providing them with support and ethical feedback. I am aware that by helping others learn I increase my learning and chances of success.*	1. 2.
2. **Halo Effect** One of the most common rating errors is known as the halo effect. Halo effect occurs when one particular trait about someone causes us to either	1. 2.

rate that person very high or very low. For example, references to the same culture might cause a student to feel a sense of similarity, or camaraderie towards the other student. Some grammar mistakes could have the opposite effect. Therefore, because a student comes from the same culture or because someone made quite a bit of grammatical mistakes we are not relieved from the obligation of careful, just assessment.

Why this error could cause a problem? When a rater gives ratings because of a trait or characteristic, the rating is not accurate, thus making it a problem. Unfortunately, the halo effect is typically an unconscious judgment. However, with awareness and training students will be more likely to think about the scores they are giving. The bottom line is to score the work and make inferences pertaining to the work, not to the culture, the language of origin, or other specificities that are irrelevant to the quality of the assignment, or to any opinions expressed in the Discussion Forum.

3. **Leniency/Strictness Error** This error is often made in an attempt to avoid conflict. Assessing the work of others might cause to some a significant degree of discomfort, especially if the student is new or initially opposed to the idea of having to score the work of others. Students might feel resentful to provide critical feedback and might not enjoy giving corrective feedback and low scores. Some students do not want to be ever confronted about this, so to avoid the awkward situation, some raters will try not to rate accurately. Instead, some students might give high ratings to all to avoid looking like a person who is critical. Giving someone high ratings when they are not deserved does not help anyone to learn or to improve. Why? The answer is simple: because areas of improvement are not addressed. On the other hand, some peer assessors can have a tendency of being stricter and therefore evaluate everyone below their actual performance. This is where being overly critical of all students; work is	1. 2.

also an example of the strictness error.	
4. Central Tendency Error Central tendency error occurs when a rater does not give high or low ratings, but tends to stay in the middle of the rating scale. Similar to the leniency error, students behaving in this manner rate others in the middle do so to avoid conflict. Rather than rate a poor assignment at the lowest spectrum of the scale, some feel they are being more fair and kind if they rate the individual in the middle of the scale. Needless to say- this is not effective at all because no one not getting a true sense as to how his or her performance is rated.	1. 2.
5. Recency Error Recency error is the rater's tendency to allow more recent incidents (either positive or negative) to tip the scale in evaluation over an entire rating period (when you are scoring). This can be extreme on both ends of the spectrum. Sometimes you might disagree with the mark you received and disappointed with not receiving enough of narrative feedback. When you allow these thoughts to cloud your judgment while scoring a peer's work, you are an example of living the recency error. Similar situation might occur if you received an unusually high rating, are happy about it and are marking other students work riding the happy wave, rather than being objective.	1. 2.
6. Contrast Error This is the tendency for a rater to evaluate a person relative to other students rather than based on the actual work. This is where a rater might ignore the actual assignment or a specific Discussion Forum posting and, instead compares student to student.	1. 2.
7. Similar-to-me Error Similarity error can have a very negative impact on certain students. Social psychology and psychology tell us that we tend to gravitate toward people that are similar to us and avoid those who differ from us. We like people who are like us. In conducting peer assessments, raters may be giving higher ratings to students who are similar to them, meaning think	1. 2.

similarly, express themselves similarly, use same examples, write (or make mistakes) in a similar fashion, etc. This is done rather than giving an accurate rating.	
8. Other Errors	1. 2.

Please remember that having bias is human, but practicing it can give other students an unfair advantage or disadvantage over others in their peer group. This is what PAO wants to help you prevent. This is also why you are being called upon to raise your awareness and apply the knowledge included in this document to consciously avoid operating on an autopilot while making these, or similar errors.

As a student at UoPeople and a Peer Assessor you are obligated to continuously improve on your peer assessment skills. Thank you for your attempts in doing so. More effort is needed.