

Pitfalls when evaluating
Module 3
Exercise 3.2

Pitfalls when observing and evaluating

- 1. First impression effect:** First impressions are often 70% correct. This means that 30% of first impressions are totally inaccurate! That means that your assessment of a person can be affected by your first impression of that person, so that you ignore later information or adapt it to fit that first impression. You must be able to let go of that first impression and supplement it with correct information.
- 2. Stereotyping:** This is when you attribute personal traits to a participant based on perceptible characteristics. If the participant is a woman, you will assume that she is not very technical-minded because all women are a-technical. Or if the participant is Surinamese by descent, he will probably be lazy. After all, all Surinamese people are like that, aren't they??
- 3. Prejudices:** As a consequence of stereotyping, we all have prejudices about how people should and should not behave. That then gives rise to a self-fulfilling prophecy: "See what I mean? Women just are not able to connect a computer!". Or: "Young people are always going to arrive 15 minutes late!".
- 4. Selective perception:** We only perceive a part of reality. After all, we cannot see everything. During an assessment, you may be only focusing on whatever interests you at that moment. As a result, you miss a great deal and there is a chance that your assessment will be flawed. You should therefore continually ask yourself whether you have enough information to make an objective assessment.
- 5. The Halo effect:** Once you have attributed a positive characteristic to a participant, you are more likely to attribute other positive characteristics to that person. This can become 'contagious'. Check carefully to see if you are doing this. Is there a reason for it?
- 6. The Horn effect:** This is the opposite of the Halo effect and involves the risk of attributing negative characteristics to participants.
- 7. Contrast effect:** Suppose you have spent the whole day holding job interviews. Up to that point, none of the candidates has been suitable. At a certain point, you become so fed up that when a new candidate presents himself in a more positive way than the previous ones you immediately think he is very suitable! In fact, this person does not fulfil your pre-defined requirements either, but yes, he is better than the others. Don't allow yourself to be influenced by the way others do their work. Assess people on the basis of the pre-defined criteria!

- 8. Projection:** This is when you attribute characteristics to a participant that actually relate to yourself. Suppose you yourself find it difficult to give direct feedback to employees. You realise that you have never seen the participant doing this either. That probably means that he will find it difficult too, right? Or has he simply never done it because it has never been expected of him?