# SELECTED EVALUATION TERMS

**Achievement tests –** Tests that measure a learner's ability to apply knowledge and/or skills based on prior training, knowledge, or experience in a given situation or to produce a specific product that meets given criteria.

**Aptitude tests** – Tests that measure the potential of a learner to perform a specific behaviour or produce a specific product.

**Behaviour –** How learners apply in-class what they have learned; how their actions on-the-job change as a result of training.

**Benefit –** A tangible gain accruing to the user organization as a result of a specified action or decision.

**Case study** – A test item that can be used by learners to demonstrate analytical or planning skills in an observable fashion.

**Checklist** – A series of items, questions, or statements that can be compared, scheduled, verified, answered, or identified by either placing or omitting a mark in a designated space.

**Competency** – A generic skill or a collection of related skills and knowledge required for the effective performance of a role.

**Computer-based testing –** A method of measurement wherein the computer asks the learner questions by displaying material on a terminal (monitor) and the learner responds directly on the terminal (monitor) or on paper.

**Constraint** – A factor or situation that limits or restricts development or completion of a project.

**Content analysis** – The process of systematically collecting, analyzing, and interpreting critical information about a specific job or task.

**Content validity** – The act of ensuring that course information, test items, and objectives have a relationship to successful performance of a specific job or to achieving a degree of proficiency in an identified skill performance.

**Costs –** Expenses incurred during the life cycle of a program or project.

**Criterion-referenced –** A method that measures, reports, and analyzes learners' performance in terms of pre-set standards.

**Cut-off score** – The test score that divides learners who demonstrate competence from those who do not.

**Data collection** – The act of gathering information on a specific topic, using reliable methods and tools.

**Data collection instruments** – Physical objects or established procedures used for collecting data in a reliable manner.

**Demonstration –** Applying knowledge and skills to a real-life situation; such a situation can be set up in the classroom or in the actual job environment and can result in an end product, which then is evaluated.

**Difficulty rating** – The level of difficulty, expressed as a percentage, of each item in a test.

**Enabling objectives** – Complete objectives, containing all the criteria and conditions that must be met before a terminal behaviour can be achieved.

**Essay format –** A test item format that requires lengthy written answers and subjective scoring.

**Essay item –** A test question or statement that requires the learner to compose a multi-sentence response to demonstrate knowledge or skill.

**Fair** – A condition wherein a test does not favour learners in terms of providing an equal opportunity to reveal what they know.

**Front-end analysis** – A systematic analysis (needs assessment) of a performance discrepancy, with the purposes of describing the discrepancy, determining the causes, recommending solutions, and, if necessary, deriving the knowledge and skills required for effective performance.

**Interview –** A data collection instrument wherein a formal meeting is held between two or more people and one of the individuals asks questions of the other(s) for the purposes of gathering information. An interview can also occur in an informal meeting or during a phone conversation, etc.

**Job analysis (study)** – The process of systematically collecting, analyzing, and interpreting critical information about a specific job position.

**Job performance** – All the behaviours needed to perform the job tasks at, or in excess of, minimum standards.

**Knowledge** – A familiarity, awareness, or understanding gained through experience or study.

**Learning** – The knowledge that learners understand or absorb, and the skills or desired attitudes that learners acquire – all as demonstrated by a prescribed behaviour.

**Learning objective –** A statement that describes an expected learning outcome to be achieved by a learner upon completion of the training program (or segment therein).

**Matching item** – A form of test question wherein the respondent is required to match a series of words or phrases with another series of words or phrases, or with numbers or letters that are keyed to features on a graphic.

**Norm-referenced –** The act of comparing learners with each other or with groups (within the context of specific learning objectives).

**Observability** – A condition wherein a work process can be observed under natural conditions and most of the information descriptive of the work process is visible to the eye or can be obtained by simple questioning.

**Observation (formal)** – An evaluation technique in which one or more persons watch a learner perform a skill, procedure, or activity and record perceptions on a measurement tool, or examine an end product of a specific performance as produced by one or more learners.

**Observation (informal)** – See formal observation for basic process; informal observation does not employ a measurement tool, and for that reason is deemed to be more subjective than objective in substance.

**Open-book test** – A written measurement tool wherein the learner is permitted to consult a textbook or other reference when responding to questions.

**Paper-and-pencil test** – A written measurement tool wherein the learner is required to respond to questions without assistance.

**Performance** – An observable set of activities that results in the accomplishment of an identified skill or a degree of proficiency in a skill, as measured by established standards.

**Performance-based –** The act of allowing a learner to exhibit a skill (and, occasionally, knowledge or attitude) that has been learned in a training program.

**Performance standards** – Specifications of the levels of accuracy and quality necessary for success; that is, how well a learner must carry out the desired performance to achieve the various purposes of the test.

**Post-test** – A tool administered at the completion of a course or module to determine how much of the course or module information the learner acquired during the course or module.

**Pre-test –** A tool administered at the beginning of a course or module to determine how much of the course or module information the learner already possesses.

**Process evaluation** – Performance assessment that concentrates on observing the quality or accuracy of the steps of the performance procedures.

**Product evaluation –** Performance assessment that focuses primarily on the end result or outcome of the performance.

**Questionnaire –** A structured set of printed questions and items used for gathering information through self-reporting.

**Random selection –** A method for choosing respondents or items by applying a mathematical formula to simulate chance distribution of respondent or item characteristics.

**Rating scale –** A measurement device that requires respondents to select a response that is on a point in a continuum between two extremes.

**Reaction –** Learners' perceptions, opinions, thoughts, or feelings: how well they like the training or what they think about it.

**Reliability** – The degree to which measures are consistent over a series of data collections.

**Results/impacts –** Bottom-line effects of the training program, such as improvements in efficiency or effectiveness that directly affect the success of the business, agency, or learning group.

**Role-play** – A technique used by learners to act out a situation wherein new knowledge, skill, or attitude can be demonstrated.

**Sample** – A finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole population.

**Short-answer item –** A question or statement that requires the respondent to write an answer that may consist of a single word or number, a phrase or clause, or a sentence or two.

**Simulation** – Applying knowledge and skills to a pre-set situation that resembles or duplicates a real-life situation or results in the creation of an end product (work sample).

**Skill performance** – All the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes needed to perform a specified skill that may be applicable to some aspect of the job.

**Task** – An observable, independent activity performed in support of a duty or job.

**Task analysis** – An analysis tool for breaking down a job or major job task into a hierarchy of discrete subtasks in increasingly finer levels of detail.

**Task list** – The major output of a task analysis.

**Task statement –** A concise sentence that describes an action that must be performed before a task can be completed.

**Terminal objectives** – Statements that describe expected learning outcomes upon completion of a training program.

**Test** – A series of questions, exercises, simulations, demonstrations, or other means of measuring the knowledge, skills, or attitudes of an individual learner or group.

**Test development –** The designing and writing of test questions.

**Test evaluation –** The act of measuring the effectiveness of test questions in determining successful completion of objectives.

**Test item** – One question or statement and its possible responses used in a test to elicit a correct response from a learner.

**Test validation –** The act of performing content validation.

**Training** – All activities designed to help learners gain the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes they need to perform a job well or to acquire a level of skill performance that has been identified as a contributing factor to successful performance.

**True/false item** – A test statement that the respondent designates as either valid or invalid.

**Validity –** The degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.

*Source: The Trainer's Library. Adapted by StFX.*