ASK Job Application
Selection Criteria Response Form
(Maximum 2 pages – *type your responses below each criteria*)

Selection criteria 1: Justify the need for and importance of, learning and development to support the achievement of organisational goals.

Over the past few decades the computerisation of work has resulted in many jobs becoming much more knowledge intensive and the rapid expansion of modern technologies are "changing the ways we produce, consume, communicate and think" (Collins & Halverson, 2009, p. 5). Just as the industrial revolution radically changed the education system in the 19th century the current knowledge revolution is starting to have a profound impact on the way we learn. New tools are reshaping the nature of work and people need to cultivate their intellectual ability to interact with sophisticated systems in order to live and work in our 21st century computerised society (Collins & Halverson, 2009).

Developing worker expertise requires providing appropriate and useful learning experiences so that learners can develop the required skills and knowledge in the shortest possible time to become more productive to the organization. Training also contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction that can assist companies to attract and retain high performance workers (Lawlor & Tovey, 2011).

In today's changing world employees will need to develop skills to find information, evaluate the usefulness and quality of information, synthesise information from different sources and produce multimedia documents and visual data (Collins & Halverson, 2009). Expert thinking and complex communication skills will be needed to be successful in the workplace (Lombardi, 2007) and training can assist in the acquisition of these skills.

Many organisations now realise that their most important assets are their people. Human skill and innovation supported by quality processes, technology and well trained leaders can provide companies with a competitive edge as the world becomes more globalised and training is a key strategy for increasing and maintaining human resource development (Lawlor & Tovey, 2011).

Lawlor and Tovey (2011) believe training provides numerous benefits for an organization when it is "done for a specific reason that will contribute to the organisation's achievement of its strategic or operational objectives" (p. 31).

Selection criteria 2: Compare and contrast the 4 major learning theories: (Behaviourist, Cognitivist, Humanist, Constructivist)

Behaviourist learning theory assumes "learners are passive participants in the learning process who respond in predictable ways to their environment" (Lawlor & Tovey, 2011, p. 64). This theory is based on the premise that behaviours are learnt from repeated experiences. The term classical conditioning is used to refer to behavior learned through stimulus and response where the stimulus is usually a painful or difficult situation. For example when a loved one refers to you by your full name in that special tone of voice – you realize you have done something wrong and automatically cringe. The term operant conditioning is used to describe the process through which people learn to display behaviours that will result in reward or avoidance of something not desired. This process of learning may also involve conditioned behaviour however it is different to classical conditioning as the repsonse is not triggered by a specfic stimulus. Reinforcement, punishment, shaping and feedback are some of the methods used to alter behaviour (Lawlor & Tovey, 2011).

Cognitive learning theorists believe that the active involvement of learners in their environment results in more complex intellectual learning. The key features of this theory are: experience, meaning and insight, and problem solving (Burns, 2002; Smith, 1998; Tovey & Lawlor, 2008).

The humanist approach emphasises the role of learning as the means for individuals to maximise their potential. That learners are free to choose, what, how and when they will learn and are will take responsibility for their own learning in response to their need for growth and development (Lawlor &

Tovey, 2011). Key features of this approach are: learning how to learn, self-evaluation, and personal needs. This approach to learning was first developed by Rogers in the 1940s and built upon by Maslow in 1943 with his theory of self-actualisation, Knowles in 1970 with his principles of adult learning and Kolb in 1984 with his theory of experiential learning (Burns, 2002; Smith, 1998; Tovey & Lawlor, 2008).

Constructivists theories are largely derived from cognitive learning theories and are based on the premise that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the learner (Bodner, 1986) and that learning is affected by the context in which an idea is taught as well as the learner's beliefs and attitudes. This theory holds that learning is deeper and more effective when it is social, engaging, relevant to students and offers learners multiple paths (Brown, 2007).

Prior to 1970 behaviourist approaches were generally used by teachers and trainers. However, due to rapid advances in cognitive psychology and educational technology there has been a massive swing amongst educators and trainers towards a more constructivist approach as many now believe cognitive theories are better approaches for preparing people to be lifelong learners. Constructivist approaches emphasise the learners ability to solve real-life practical problems and encourage people to work in teams to complete projects. In this approach the role of the teacher is to provide resources and to guide and suport the learners to achieve their own goals (Conway, 1997).

Understanding learning theories will provide trainers with a solid conceptual framework that they can use to plan useful learning experiences. However, usually no one learning theory can adequately meet all learning requirements therefore a combination of perspectives is generally required to achieve workplace strategies (Lawlor & Tovey, 2011).

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