WOMEN AND AWARD RESTRUCTURING

SKILL

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BRANCH

Preface

This is the third discussion paper produced by the Women's Employment Branch on award restructuring and its effects on and potential benefit to women workers. The first paper was a general overview of the structural efficiency principle; the second a review of the debate about the training needs of industry as these relate to women workers because in those industries where women are concentrated, the development of a skill hierarchy and career path has not been a part of the work organisation.

Skill identification is a necessary precursor to the development of training schemes and the successful identification of each skill component in any job is vital to the success and the efficiency of the training.

For a long time the skills of 'women's work' have been overlooked. The award system to date has generally not been predicated on a skills-based pay structure, particularly in industries where women predominate. The debate about skill rarely involves a definition of skill. There is no clear accepted definition and unless this is developed and adopted formally, the situation of skill recognition will remain as adhoc as it is today.

This paper offers no conclusive program for resolution of the problems it raises. Rather, it raises the issues which must be discussed to help establish their place in the industrial agenda.

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Introduction

'There is an urgent need for higher skill levels in Australian manufacturing industry as well as an increased capacity for adoption of new skills in the future.' [1]

Attitudes towards skill are changing and skill is being seen more and more as central to the efficient operation of industry. In recent years the Australian workforce has been described as inefficient and uncompetitive and skill development has been prescribed as the treatment that would cure these afflictions. The focus of industrial analysis, negotiation and many decisions of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (IRC), have sought to increase the productivity of the Australian workforce by defining work processes which rely on skill development. In this context the notion of skill, what it is and who has it, must become central. It will be difficult to improve the skills base if we are unclear about what it is. It has become necessary to tease out exactly what is meant by skill, exactly how it is acquired, where and when it is used, and how different skills should be valued.

Attitudes towards skill are changing

The current emphasis on skill formation also challenges the policies, rules and traditions which have governed the way work is carried out. Successful career path development requires creating flexibility by skill acquisition, and current work organisation will need to be changed. It involves a move away from Taylorist methods of increased specialisation and deskilling to multiskilling. Unless new forms of work organisation are based on skill recognition and development, little impact will be made on the employment conditions of women.

The need to define skill has become critical as debates on the restructuring and reorganising of work in this country dominate industrial relations. Traditional notions of skill have become as redundant as the old methods of work organisation which harboured them. In the past the most commonly used notions of skill were the simple division between skilled work and unskilled work and these definitions were applied as if each were the opposite of the other and had no commonalities.

Simple divisions between "skilled" and "unskilled" are no longer appropriate

These perceptions have been treated as non-transferable, a worker is either seen to have skill or not to have it, and there has been little development from one state to the other. In industrial arenas the categories of 'skilled' and 'unskilled' have been used to determine the wages of workers, and the work organisation of a workplace. Whilst a great amount of unclear language has been used to define the differences between the two, the main factor used in the past was the length of formal training undertaken and its mandatory requirement for job entry. Skill, like value and ability is one of many terms used in industrial relations decisions as if it had specific and determinate meaning but which on examination is revealed to be difficult to define and therefore is difficult to identify and to measure.

Skill has traditionally been associated with the trades or crafts and work outside this area is not defined as skilled. It is either defined as unskilled or semi-skilled or it is defined as technical or professional. To suggest that

[1] Australian Manufacturing Council, **Skills in Australian Manufacturing Industry: Future Directions;** APGS, Canberra, February 1988.

technical or professional workers had no skill, in any general sense of the word, would be unacceptable everywhere. This shows the extent to which the word has been co-opted by the trades and crafts workers and divorced from its more general meaning. This obscured meaning then makes it possible to define any group of non-trade workers as unskilled.

As shall be shown here, clear understandings of skill must be widely available if restructuring is to be successful, especially at this time when many industries are 'testing' their award restructuring proposals and attempting to build their skill-based career paths.

What is skill?

The Shorter Oxford Dictionary gives the following definition:

'Expertness, practised ability, facility in an action or in doing or to do something; dexterity, tact.'[2]

Skill has always been an important component of industrial arbitration. From the time of establishment, the Arbitration Commission has seen skill as a measure influencing wage rates without clearly defining what skill is.

When fixing the minimum wage in 1907, Justice Higgins considered it his obligation to fix a 'living rate' for an 'unskilled' worker. He did so clearly refusing to define skill or different rates paid for skill, whilst at the same time making it clear that it was appropriate for 'skill' to demand higher rates:

The need to define skill

'It is not for me to find a scientific basis for the distinction in wages paid to various skilled employees as between themselves and the unskilled and one another. The distinction made may, perhaps, be traced to the operation of monopoly in greater and less degree; But the fact they exist and are recognised in the practice of society is sufficient for me...'[3]

In 1909 Higgins made a clearer statement which referred again to skill without defining it, and which enshrined it as a component of the rate paid.

'It is advisable to make the demarcation as clear and definite as possible between that part of wages which is for mere living, and that part of wages which is due for skill... it is necessary to keep the living wage as a thing sacrosanct, beyond the reach of bargaining. But when the skilled worker has once been secured a living wage, he has attained nearly to a fair contractual level with the employer, and, with caution, bargaining may be allowed to operate.'[4]

Since these decisions the Commission has not seen it necessary to define skill clearly, although it has made many determinations based on categories of skill and on relativities based on skill. Although there has been no clear definition provided, the Commission seems to have consistently linked skill to an acquisition of it through formal training courses.

It is obvious however that skill exists in many jobs, in fact it is difficult to imagine a job which requires no skill at all. In trying to define, recognise and measure skill, many analysts have divided it into categories in a number of different ways.

Categories of skill

a) Operational skill: the ability to organise the work rather than just reacting to it.

b) Technical skill: the skill a person needs to do the required job (the job you are employed to do).

2   Turner, G.W., **The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary,** Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1987.

3   6 CAR, 71, Cited; Ryan & Conlon, **Gentle Invaders,** Nelson, Sydney, 1975, Page 92.

4   3 CAR 32; Cited; Ryan & Conlon, op. cit.

c) Social skill: interpersonal skills that allow management and communication, or allow you to get on with each other. [5]

This categorisation is useful in so far as it is descriptive of different types of tasks involved in work and ascribes skill categories to match them.

Another common categorisation focuses on the differences in the human faculties employed.

a) Manual skills: requiring physical effort and includes dexterity, physical co-ordination, and the efficient and safe use of strength.

b) Cognitive skills: requiring mental effort and includes acquiring and communicating information, decision making, judgement of priorities.

c) Interpersonal skills: include flexibility, diplomacy, and the ability to deal and negotiate with others.

Although these categorisations are helpful, they fall short of any definition of skill itself which has a number of aspects:

1. the knowledge to execute a task;

2. the ability to do it well; and

3. the ability to do it with speed.

Considerations and components of skill

Within these aspects we are looking at ability, efficiency and competency. Other considerations are resourcefulness, cooperativeness, independence and problem-solving as well as literacy, numeracy and basic technical skills.

Both the earlier categorisations included 'social skill' which is not only a description of certain kinds of work, but also an attribute which varies from person to person. You can say she has well developed social skills but these are not taught in a formal training institution, nor are they necessarily gained from previous work experience. They are part of a person's personality, they may have been taught at home in the family. This skill was listed highly when groups of employers and educators were asked to list skill requirements for a variety of jobs. [6]

Social skills are in demand for a large number of jobs which require communication with the public, or with a large number of workers, for example receptionists, air flight attendants, shop assistants, counter staff in banks, insurance and finance companies. It is no secret that employers are looking for this skill when they are recruiting and a great deal of advice to job seekers highlights the need to project a friendly personality. This skill is also considered necessary for management or team work.

Despite the high profile of this skill in the minds of employers and educators, and despite the large proportion of jobs which require it as a condition of employment, it is not recognised as a skill in so far as it is not 'taught' and thus it is not a factor in wage fixing considerations.

Other aspects are equally confusing. In some jobs physical strength is necessary to carry out the work, but in itself is not a skill. However it can be used more or less efficiently and more or less safely, and in this respect is associated with skill.

Only skills that are formally taught are recognised

Qualifications have been used traditionally as proof of skill. They have often been seen as the single necessary component for a job to be recognised as skilled.

Skills and Tasks

The word skill is often confused with tasks and the two are often used interchangeably. For example, word processing can be a skill and also a task. The former refers to the knowledge to do it and the latter refers to the practical application.

Ann Byrne uses the following differentiation:

'A task is the observable component of the job. It can be broken down into bits to establish a series of further tasks. Skill is the knowledge and attitudes involved in safely and competently performing the task.' [7]

Skill is the translation of the knowledge of how to undertake a task into the actual execution of that task.

The level of complexity of a skill is a combination of the complexity of the knowledge involved and of the difficulty involved in executing the task. It is these factors which largely account for the categorisations used above. Cognitive skills tend to require complex knowledge and the execution is simple if the knowledge is correct. For example, a person who processes applications for government benefits must have a clear knowledge of the requirements for eligibility and the information needed for assessment to be made, but she must also be able to make judgements on borderline cases and to request further information where necessary. All of these matters are mental and are all based on a complex range of knowledge. The actual execution of the task, that is of either recommending or objecting to an application is simple providing the knowledge is clear.

Skill level relies on a combination of knowledge involved and difficulty in executing the task

On the other hand, manual skill requires a limited and given amount of knowledge and it is the execution which is the most demanding part of the task, either because of the fine motor co-ordination used or the amount of physical effort required.

5   Enid Mumford, **Participative System, Designing: Structure and Method, Systems Objectives Solutions,** No.1, Canberra 1981.

6   Beare Hedley and Millikan Ross H., **Skilling the Australian Community: Futures for Public Education,** Australian Teachers Federation and the Commission for the Future, Melbourne, April 1988.

7   Byrne, Ann, "Skills Reviews", **Labour Resourcer No. 6,** November 1989.

Acquiring skill

1. Skill acquisition begins as soon as a young child begins to learn. The ability to communicate and the efficiency with which it is carried out, is learnt in early childhood. Other forms of skills valued in the workforce are also acquired in this way.

2. Basic primary and secondary school education provides workers with literacy, numeracy and some specialised skill areas, for example developed communication skills, analytical skills, some technical skills, and keyboard skills.

3. Tertiary training in specialised courses involve a prolonged learning period with no practical experience. They lead to degrees and diplomas which qualify the holder for one occupation regarded as professional or para-professional. This type of study covers a wide range of information.

4. Post-secondary external technical and trade training is undertaken as a combination of separate study and practical experience. This produces workers with qualifications which classify them as 'skilled'. In this type of training workers receive a broad and sound grounding in a range of skills relevant to the industry, and at the end of training have a qualification and title which guarantees them a rate of pay throughout the industry.

5. Inhouse task-specific training takes place at the workplace and produces workers classified as un/semi-skilled. The training provides narrow and job specific or task specific skills often not recognised outside the enterprise.

6. Work experiences involves a process of continued learning as a task is undertaken and continued practise at the task results in an ability to complete the task with greater capability.

Measuring skill

Skill involves levels of efficiency. A worker who is more efficient than another is regarded as more skilled, for example a typist who types accurately at sixty words a minute is more skilled than one who types at forty five words a minute. The components being measured in this case are a combination of accuracy and speed. Both components must contribute and for different tasks each may be given greater emphasis. To measure the greater or lesser degree of skill a worker has, it is usual practice to use the amount of training, or the amount of experience as indicators.

The other form of skill measurement is a measurement between skills. This is important for wage fixation and also for developing career paths. A measure of one skill over another is usually based on the complexity of each, and this can sometimes be broken down to the number of simple tasks involved in completing a job.

It is necessary to distinguish between these two different measurements: the measurement of one skill with another ie. inter-skill measurement, and the measurement of efficiency of skill as performed by individual skill holders, i.e intra-skill measurement.

Both have relevance to career path building. For example to measure one skill against another is necessary for developing a hierarchy of skills for the progression of a career path. A measure of quality within skill also provides stages in career paths in some industries, for example a slow inexperienced typist works at a lower level than an experienced one. Many jobs incorporate a number of, and a mixture of different types of skill and the job is measured overall. One of the differences between a trades worker and a process worker is the number of tasks and therefore the amount of skill required in each job.

Women's work and skill

Differentiation of skill and its value has been determined by gender

The gender segregation of occupations is, at a more basic level a gender segregation of skills. Women tend to work in jobs which demand operational and social skill whereas men predominantly work with manual and technical skills. The division of skilled and unskilled is close to the occupational gender division of the workforce. Women's jobs in general are classified as unskilled or semi-skilled and men's as skilled. If award restructuring exercises are to deliver thorough and on-going changes to increase efficiency and productivity, the agreed differences in skill levels must take account of the actual work performed and the actual skill employed in performing it. Gender has no place in the differentiation of skills or in the measurement of their worth.

However, gender has historically been a major factor in determining the skill involved in carrying out a particular occupation. Traditional analysis of why the gender division of labour coincides so closely with the division of skilled and unskilled are largely socio-economic, and stress the unequal distribution of domestic and child care responsibilities, unequal opportunities in education, social and employer bias against women in the workforce. These explanations fail to challenge traditional concepts of skill, and accept that women's work is unskilled. Many attempts to provide equal opportunity focus on the need for a more equal distribution of the 'skilled' and the 'unskilled' jobs.

Women's work and their skills under-valued

A different approach is increasingly being adopted which ascribes women's work as being undervalued. On examination what this means is that the skill involved is undervalued, and the skill or skills involved are undervalued by not being recognised at all. There are a number of theories to explain this. The most prominent is that the work women tend to undertake in the paid work force involves the same skills they use in unpaid domestic work. The lack of payment for work done by women is seen to devalue that work even when it is done collectively in the paid workforce. Another is that women's work is socially 'invisible', it is not seen as 'real work', and is therefore denied its just reward.

The reasons for the gender division of the workforce are complex and historical. The organisation of the workforce which we are restructuring today took place at a time when the workplace environment was predominantly male. The work that men did gained its high value because men organised and demanded recognition for their labour. The history of the recognition of skilled tradeswork is well known, but it was male workers who demanded recognition for their skills and insisted on a certain standard of training for entry to trade. Men came into the workforce as boys with the knowledge that they would stay until old age; they built themselves career paths and demanded career development.

On the other hand, the majority of women worked only before marriage. Their attitude to work was that they had a 'job' which was a temporary interlude. They had little commitment to a 'career'; they didn't demand skill recognition or higher rates of pay in the same way that men did. Even

women who worked after marriage most often regarded it as another temporary interlude. This attitude was reinforced by employment practices which discriminated blatantly against married women. Their presence in the workforce was seen to be a privilege extended to them. They were often the first laid-off in retrenchment plans in industries which had career prospects, such as the public service, where married women were refused permanency until the late 1960s.

It is only recently that it has been socially accepted that a large proportion of women want to build careers which will last for their working lives. This new realisation and the reality of the longevity of women's participation in the workforce is as vital a reason as the introduction of new technology for restructuring industry and workplace re-organisation. To achieve this, old concepts of gender divisions must be challenged.

The changing work place and role of women in society

Both men and women value the work of men more highly than they value the work of women. This is clearly demonstrated in an experimental situation when a piece of work, an essay or an art object are presented as being done by John McKay or by Joan McKay to different groups. The standard result is that the work thought to be done by a man is valued much more highly. [8]

Men's performances are rated more highly for identical work and men are seen to 'have more ability' if something is done well whereas women are seen to have put in a lot of effort. Ability is recognised as part of skill, whereas effort is not. [9]

When it comes to skill it is hardly surprising that the skills used by women are valued less highly than the skills used by men.

8 Example taken from Claire Burton, **Redefining Merit**, Monograph No. 2, Affirmative Action Agency, Sydney 1988.
9 Ibid.

Skills women bring to their work

In her Monograph, *Gender Bias in Job Evaluation*,[10] Claire Burton lists some of the factors of women's work which job evaluators frequently overlook. Among these are a number of skills:

- fine motor movement skills such as rapid finger dexterity;

- special body co-ordination or expert use of fingers and hands;

- co-ordination (as against supervising);

- protecting confidentiality;

- record keeping;

- working office machines;

- language skills;

- coping with interruptions and doing many tasks at once;

- responding to complaints from the public; and

- caring for people.

Skill assessment, identification and evaluation are important for equity. Most of the skills in the above list are usually not recognised or accorded value in pay structures, nor do they carry any status. Women who have these skills are often classified as unskilled or semi-skilled.

The range of women's skills and the ways in which they acquire them

This situation is perpetuated by the emphasis traditionally given to formal training systems, particularly trade training. Workers who do not undergo this type of training are discriminated against by the non-recognition of the number and complexity of skills which they bring to their work. In the case of women, much of their training is done informally at home where they learn the skills involved in running a household from their mothers.

Even when specifically female skills are taught formally they are often treated differently and in ways which undervalue that skill. For example typing and shorthand, both extremely complex skills are taught at secondary school to a level which equips young women to find employment. No other skill is taught to this level at school, and the effect of this is that the skill is undervalued. Other workers who go straight into employment without any further training are regarded as unskilled and although shorthand/typists are not actually called unskilled, their work is valued as such.

When the number and complexity of skills involved in carrying out the work of typing are identified, the level of skill involved becomes clear. A typist must develop speed and accuracy to a high degree and this involves a high level of fine motor co-ordination; they must also have organisational skills, and be able to make decisions on lay-out and re-wording. They must have knowledge of grammar, spelling, and acronyms. They must be able to format materials and they must judge urgencies and priorities. Yet for

typists, there is no regulation of courses and no standard for certification. A typist must undertake a typing test at each job she goes to in order to prove her ability.

Women's skills are not recognised in pay structures

Lack of recognition of the many different skills and levels of competence that women bring to their work means that they may have a range of complex productive skills, that they may build on and develop, but all without recognition in pay structures.

Women bring skills into the workforce which may be developed to a high level through the work they have done as managers of households. Many job advertisements call for 'mature' women. In this sense the skills they bring with them are recognised but when it comes to pay rates and job status they are unlikely to be recognised.

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10   Burton, Claire, **Gender Bias in Job Evaluation**, Monograph 3, Affirmative Action Agency, Sydney 1988.

Award Restructuring & Skill

'For women, the restructuring process will either reinforce the existing division of labour by sex or it will mean the revaluing of women's traditionally undervalued skills.'[11]

This is the case because of the emphasis that award restructuring places on skill development and its centrality in career progression and wage structures.

'The basis of award restructuring is the development of skill as the key determinant of job classifications, wages and career progression. This is based on the recognition that flexibility and efficiency rely on the input of a skilled and responsible workforce.

'The idea that workers should have the opportunity to progress up a career ladder from one skill level to another is a striking innovation in industry and a radical departure from previous job structures, where workers were either 'unskilled', 'semi-skilled' or 'skilled' and where there was no clear notion of advancement.'[12]

Redefining skill and restructuring

Because the nature of women's work and men's work differs in assessments of skill levels, in training patterns and in workplace organisation, the effects of award restructuring on women workers must be different from its effect on men. Award restructuring necessitates industry more and more to tend towards targeted skill formation. The Australian Manufacturing Council emphasises the changes in attitudes in relation to skill when it says:

'The distinction between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled work must be eliminated, and all workers participate in life-long skill acquisition.'[13]

Award restructuring is in part a response to changing workforce conditions, particularly to the introduction of new computer technology. At first this technology seemed to threaten the skill of workers; it now seems that it challenges traditional attitudes to skill and divisions of skill. Some observers believe that it enables a more equitable distribution of skilled work:

'A number of changes in the industry in terms of technology applied to production processes and new manufacturing techniques being introduced have implications for the content and format of training which will be required. The impact of these changes appears to be progressively eroding traditional divisions in work performed by skilled and unskilled, formally trained and inhouse trained, and male and female workers.'[14]

New technology will break down traditional divisions of skill

While new technology will break down traditional divisions of work, it is important that award restructuring develops new practices to ensure that pay, status and career opportunities are features of these expanded jobs.

The shift in manufacturing to microtechnology demands new workplace organisation and new skills. This presents a danger for women workers as do all changes, for unless particular efforts are made by governments, unions and industry to ensure that women are included in the processes of acquisition of new skills, they are most likely to be left behind.

To build career paths, levels of skill have to be recognised and classified. Movement from one level to another necessitates training. This places a great emphasis on the recognition of the skills at each level. It also involves job redesign to improve efficiency. This again depends on competent recognition of the skills employed. To meet these needs, skills audits, reviews and analysis are taking place throughout industry. As skills previously unrecognised are usually those of women workers, this is the most delicate area for award restructuring exercises and the one where there is the most to gain, or the most to be lost.

It cannot be taken for granted that women will be incorporated in an equal way into workplace reorganisation. The banking industry which underwent massive reorganisation and rationalisation of the work process and staffing arrangements in the branches provides a good example of the pitfalls for women workers. The number of women working in the banking industry had increased dramatically since the Second World War. At first they worked in restricted areas but gradually entered a wider range of jobs. Bank managers always rose from within the ranks of the bank staff and for men it was a career which ensured promotion provided performance was of average ability.

Women's equality in the workforce will not "just happen"

Employees were promoted from one section of the work to another, gradually working their way up a career ladder. Women were just beginning to break into this career structure when microtechnology was introduced. The first machines introduced kept the ledgers. Previously this had been a highly skilled job and was a step towards managerial status. When ledger-keeping was automated, women were put to work operating the machines and it became a dead-end job which provided no overall banking skill and which was separated from the career structure. In the meantime men were able to bypass the whole area and climb the career ladder more quickly. The computerisation of the industry further entrenched this process. Much of the work previously done in branches has been centralised in electronic data-banks. These employ women who are located outside of the banks altogether and they have no experience of work in a branch at all.[15]

The real test of award restructuring will be in the workplace implementation of changed awards and the extent to which it provides a catalyst for redefining skill and reorganising work. It is at this level that the accuracy of skill definition will cause improvement or chaos. For this reason unions and management are looking to ways of ensuring this accuracy. To meet these needs many organisations are turning to skills audits, reviews and analysis. In doing so there is a danger for women workers that these processes will be undertaken without any regard for or understanding of the intricate and yet neglected relationship between women's work and skill. Although award restructuring has intended to reevaluate old concepts of skill and work organisation it has unfortunately been accompanied by little educational material challenging the old concepts. There is therefore a danger that work reorganisation will take place in a way limited by the information available to those involved.

Workplace implementation should involve redefining skill and reorganising work

11   Employment and Skills Formation Council, **Guidelines on Women and Award Restructuring,** National Board of Employment Education and Training, Canberra, August 1989, (vii).

12   Byrne, Ann, **Fair Return** (Draft), Melbourne 1989.

13   Australian Manufacturing Council, op. cit., page 1.

14   Windsor, Kim, **Shortcircuiting, Women in Electronics: Skills, Training and Working Practices,** Department of Employment, Education & Training, AGPs, Canberra, 1989, page 59.

15   ACTU, Women's Information Service, **Technology and Employment - Part 1: Women's Job Displacement,** May 1980.

A gender free skills review/audit

A skills review is the accounting of skills existing in an organisation and the equating of those to the considered skill needs of the organisation. Its aim is to provide a clear picture of how career development can take place and at what points training fits in.

A skills audit has a similar objective but its emphasis is more on a breakdown of the simple tasks of each individual worker rather than on an overview of each area of work.

There are many different approaches to skills reviews and audits and there is a great deal of debate about their relative merits. For further information about these please refer to the bibliography of this document. There can be no one model as industries and enterprises have different needs and capacities. Here we will concentrate on the requirements for conducting a gender free skills review process.

1. Awareness of Gender Issues

All those involved in the review must be acquainted with the issues raised by a consideration of gender and skill. This will involve management, unions, consultants, training facilitators and educators and the workers on the job.

Methods of Approach

i. Literature which provides an explanation of the lack of recognition of women's skills can be distributed.

ii. Training seminars can be arranged to make all participants aware of the issues.

iii. A list of skills (such as the one presented here as Appendix i) can be circulated. This should not be presented as a conclusive list but as a guide to stimulate approaches to jobs in the enterprise.

iv. Where applicable the Affirmative Action Policy Officer should be involved at all levels of the process and the affirmative action plan kept in mind when decisions are being made. If this is not done, subsequent job reorganisation will probably be required or it may hinder the efficient implementation of the plan at a later stage.

2. Raising Gender Issues

i. In many instances an outside firm of consultants will be engaged to conduct the review. When tendering for consultants one of the key selection criteria should be their experience and/or knowledge of gender issues.

ii. Most reviews will start with a meeting of management, union representatives and if applicable, outside consultants. Affirmative Action and EEO Officers should be involved in these initial discussions. Gender questions should be raised and plans to deal with them drawn up as a part of the overall plan.

iii. The review and its outcomes will obviously be more successful if all workers in the enterprise are fully acquainted with its objectives. Part of these objectives and part of the information given to all workers must be a statement that every attempt will be made to break down any gender bias, segregation or discrimination which exists in the organisation.

iv. A questionnaire is likely to be developed and it is vital to make sure that it has no gender discriminatory language. It must also ensure that all questions asked will encourage all skills used, that is, recognised and unrecognised, to be listed.

v. A special attempt should be made when questionnaires are being filled in or when interviews are taking place that women workers are encouraged to give a fair account of their skill levels. This involves noting that women tend to underestimate their own worth and this must be countered.

3. Identifying Skills

i. Training should be undertaken to teach the identification of skill. This must involve an understanding of what skill is and how it relates to the tasks being carried out.

ii. Tasks need to be analysed in a group situation and then the skills used in each task teased out. Individuals within groups would be encouraged to stimulate each others ability to identify skills.

iii. Once the skills have been identified they need to be compared with each other in preparation for job reorganisation and career path building.

A gender free review

Questions to ask include the following:

i. Are groups of women workers trapped in dead end jobs?

ii. Are skills of all women workers given equal rating with those of men? If not, why not?

iii. What measures have been taken to ensure the full involvement of staff at every level of the skills review i.e the level of workers and consultants?

C. Appendix i

List of Skills: It is important that this list is not regarded as comprehensive. It is merely a guide to the skills commonly held and used at work. It is presented to provide stimulation for recognising the skills which exist and which are used in an organisation.

Cognitive skills which include:

- literacy;
- communication;
- thinking & problem solving;
- numeracy;
- scientific knowledge;
- languages; and
- ability to handle new technology and the changing nature of work.

Affective/attitudinal skills which include:

- decision-making & leadership;
- flexibility & independence;
- enterprise & excellence;
- group learning & participation;
- positive attitudes to the work ethic and to business;
- acquiring information;
- conveying information;
- applying logical processes;
- ability to perform practical tasks; and
- team skills.

General liberal skills and attitudinal qualities:

- confidence;
- creativity;
- curiosity;
- flexibility and initiative;
- independence;
- lateral thinking;
- maturity;
- motivation;
- perseverance;
- problem-solving;
- pursuit of excellence; and
- team skills.

Applied educational skills:

- clear thinking;
- oral & written comprehension and communication in English & other languages;
- successfully developed numerical concepts and skills;
- a degree of technical literacy;
- ability in information gathering from libraries and computers; and
- ability to work in groups and teams.

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