

# **Findings from the JRA Pilot Survey in Australia**

**Cedefop and OECD International Seminar on  
Measuring Generic Work Skills Using the Job  
Requirements Approach,  
Thessaloniki 12-13 Feb 2009**



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# OVERVIEW

- The Australian labour market
- Survey methodology
- General differences in skill use
- Selected findings
- Conclusions and policy uses

# AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET

## Australian Economy (May 2008)

- Unemployment: 4.2%
- Participation Rate: 65.3%

## Labour Market Structure

- 45.1% of employed persons are women.
- Major employing industries:
  - Retail 14.7%
  - Manufacturing 11.3%
  - Property and Business Services 11.0%
  - Health and Community Services 11.0%

# METHODOLOGY

500 household and 102 primary school teacher surveys

- Both surveys reasonably representative.
- Randomly selected

Household Response:

- Gross Response Rate: 78%
- Net Response Rate: 49%



# DIFFERENCES IN SKILL USE

## BROAD OVERVIEW

- Managers, Professionals and Associate Professionals had the highest use of the Reading, Writing, Instructing, Self Direction, Learning and Autonomy skill domains.
- Elementary Workers had the lowest use of all skills domains except Physical and Internal Interaction skills
- Workers in Education had the highest use of Reading, Writing, Customer Interaction, Instructing, and Self Direction skills.
  - Teacher Survey respondents also had a high use of these skills.

# WORKPLACE INTEGRATION

- Australian workers generally reported working closely with others.
- Workplace interactions were positively related to business size.
- Part-time workers more likely to be disconnected from colleagues.
  - more likely to not need to interact with co-workers.
- Non-managerial staff frequently teach co-workers new things.

# COMPUTER USE

- 79.4 per cent of jobs involved computer use.
  - Improved skills will improve the job performance of many
- 7.9 per cent of all working respondents likely to be limited to jobs that do not involve computer use.
- Younger workers use computers at a more complex level within every major occupation category.

## Areas of possible further investigation

- Do younger workers undertake similar tasks using more complex computer methods?
- Do younger workers gravitate towards jobs that require greater computing skills within major occupation categories?
- Do younger workers undertake more complex computing tasks because they are junior to their older counterparts?

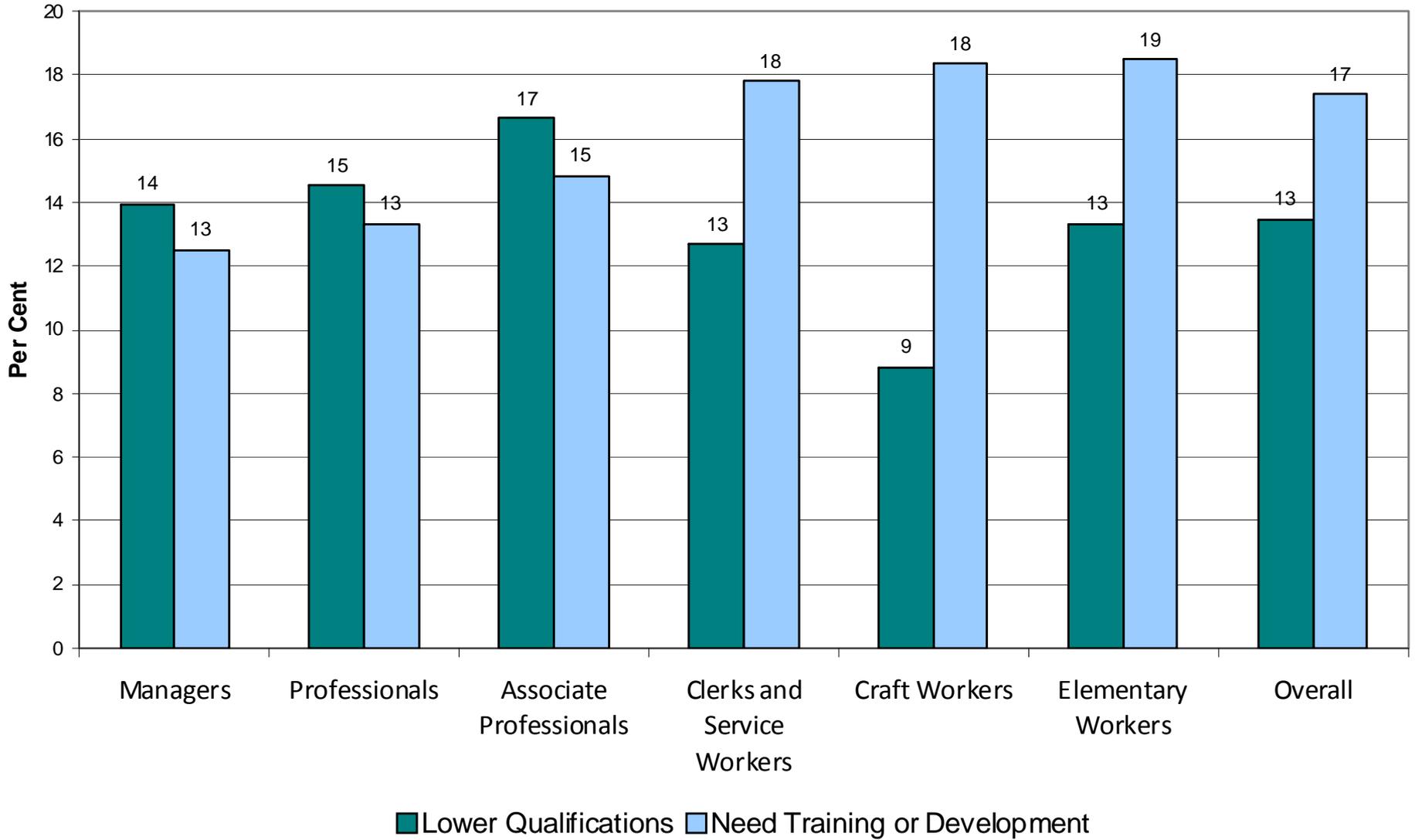
# UNSUITABLE APPLICANTS AND SKILLS USE

- Does greater use of a particular skill translate to its acquisition being a greater barrier to employment?
- Information on using an Australian Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences
  - Asks about recent recruitment exercises.
  - Data on the ability of employers to fill vacancies.
  - If and why recruitment was 'difficult'
  - Information on unsuitable applicants.

# SKILLS USE AND APPLICANT UNSUITABILITY

- In occupations where literacy and numeracy skills were used the **most**, employers most frequently found the lack of these skills to be a significant barrier to applicant suitability.
- However, inadequate Interpersonal and Self Direction skills were greater barriers to employment in occupations where they were used the **least**.
- Accordingly, the skills development needs of job seekers should be based on an assessment of their own skills as well as those required for their desired job.

# SKILL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS



# HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

- JRA results indicated that higher qualifications had no impact on:
  - levels of autonomy and self direction
  - the frequency with which workers helped others to learn new things; or
  - the frequency that respondents persuaded and influenced others.

# CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY USES

- Cognitive testing and pilot results suggest that a JRA module would provide valuable data for PIAAC.
- The education and training of workers may influence the skills that workers use to complete workplace tasks.
- JRA provides important data on skill use.
  - Needs to be supplemented carefully by supply side data before policy decisions are made.