

APPENDIX ONE

FIFTY-ONE SAMPLED DECISIONS

CONVENTIONS:

The researcher sampled decisions in formal interviews with members of staff in the Educational Development Department. Each member of staff received five note cards and entered a sample decision on each card. The researcher interviewed each informant again to discuss and clarify the details of each decision and, if necessary, assist the informant to scan workplace activities for likely examples of decisions that could be used.

The process centred on recent decisions, decisions currently being considered, and likely decisions arising in the near future.

In most cases informants found the process easy and fluently provided examples. In a few cases, however, they found the process difficult and lengthy discussions were required to clarify details of decisions. The ethnographer's strategy of leaving notecards behind with informants during an absence probably gave them a chance to talk together informally about the process and generate useful ideas.

In each case the researcher asked the informant to provide details in response to the phrase "This decision involves . . .". The researcher recorded these notes carefully and attached them to each sampled decision.

<p>(1.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to commence higher degree studies.</p>	<p>(2.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to give to two colleagues an outline of things to think about for the summer school four week program.</p>
<p>This decision involves setting aside both work and unpaid time for study. It is understood that if the present position held by the staff member becomes tenured, then there will be competition for the position from others with higher degrees. There is concern about the nature and degree of this pressure, given the career pathway which the member of staff has followed, emphasising service to the department through teaching and development of programs. In universities, it seems, research is more highly valued for career advancement than teaching. There is a sense of resignation that research must be pursued.</p>	<p>This decision involves the requirement that after a four week English language program an evaluation session is to be held. Outline lists provide a focus for discussion during the session.</p>
<p>(3.) A decision to resolve the problem of the air conditioner.</p>	<p>(4.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to agree to teach in the Community Health Nursing Course in October of this year (now April).</p>
<p>This decision involves three people being located in one office space fully enclosed with only a single door outlet. In summer months there is conflict over the use of the air-conditioner: when it is on it causes asthma for one person; when it is off it results in headaches for the other. The use of a personal electric fan is no help during hot weather. This problem should be resolved in some way; it is a seasonal problem.</p>	<p>This decision involved the head of department walking in to speak and giving a reminder of last year's course. He asked if it was enjoyed. The reply was yes. He asked if it could be done again. The reply was yes. He gave the commencement date: 6th October. The member of staff diaried the date.</p>

<p>(5.) A decision to redevelop a one year course in basic chemistry: Foundation Studies Chemistry.</p>	<p>(6.) A decision by one member of staff to limit service attendance on the St Albans campus to one day per week only.</p>
<p>This decision involves a course that has been running for three years. The problem concerns bridging year studies and arises from the differing natures of the two student groups: students without a background in chemistry studies (many of whom lack interest in the field), and they require the unit on their way to their preferred option of non-science studies: for example, business studies; students with significant backgrounds in chemistry studies (many of whom have a high interest in the field), these are heading into science courses.</p>	<p>This decision involves the allocation of time and resources available to the range of duties built up on the Footscray campus. Provided that services on the Footscray campus can be adequately met in the remaining available days, one day per week will be spent on the St Albans campus for the purpose of initiating, developing, and assisting in provision of support services in the Maths/Science areas. There is no outside support in these areas at present at St Albans.</p>
<p>(7.) A decision to raise people's consciousness about the limited space and resources in the media studies area.</p>	<p>(8.) A decision to use a new system of computer technology in conducting equipment loans to students.</p>
<p>This decision involves certain difficulties in rendering satisfactorily professional services to requests from teaching staff in certain instances. Further funds for space and equipment are required if high standards are to be continually developed in the field. There seems to be a gap between bureaucratic and professional points of view on adequacy of space and resources in a number of fields. A case in point is studio space. Photographers need wide space for scale and distance. Bureaucrats do not understand this and see any space as opportunities for accommodating further numbers of students and the like.</p>	<p>This decision involved realising inadequacies in the old system. Contact was made with a colleague on campus who had been using a system in the library for the past 6 to 12 months. This system was investigated. The program was modified and installed at the beginning of the semester. Using the old system, the loans were entered manually by keyboard - date, student number, and so on. The new system uses menus/ windows and a barcode system, accessed by wandng equipment.</p>

<p>(9.) A decision to compile materials on a program: its promotion, administration, delivery and follow-up: summary sheet: model; elements; learning centre "in-house" publications.</p>	<p>(10.) A decision made last year to change the format of First Year Nursing Tutorials for Chemistry and Physics.</p>
<p>This decision involves preparation for a one hour meeting with the vice-chancellor, the department's pro vice-chancellor and the dean of the faculty of Human Development. There is a need to produce something convincing on paper: to demonstrate rather than to state the message, and to provide, a set of materials which is a forceful argument for the wide-ranging and comprehensive nature of the work of the department. Format is an issue: to show how approximately 10% of work is within media studies, while 90% of work is within the area of the learning centre.</p>	<p>This decision involves a cut-back in the chemistry component of the nursing course: 28 hours back to 18 hours per year. Mainstream lecturing could commence half-way through the first semester. A program was offered for the first six weeks for students who lacked a chemistry background (head-start program). There was a three-way communication in the process of making the decision: centre teaching staff; nursing teaching staff; chemistry lecturing staff. All of the orientation students are being consulted on this matter as well.</p>
<p>(11.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to collaborate on a handbook for students in business/ law: links with other staff and universities.</p>	<p>(12.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre not to work full time in the department at this point.</p>
<p>This decision involves an on-going relationship of three years in which ideas and materials have been co-developed and shared in the two departments. This particular handbook has been the subject of planning for 12 months. Half a day per week is to be used on this project. It is to be compiled on a word processor and will be sold to students on both campuses.</p>	<p>This decision involves the management of life priorities such as family, lengthy commuting, teaching load, and academic study. The production of a handbook for students in the field of business/ law in collaboration with a member of staff on a neighbouring campus may turn out to be profitably related to a research project undertaken for a higher degree. Pedagogy and learning styles of adult students in business/ law is the field of interest. At this point there is a need for guidance.</p>

<p>(13.) A decision to offer a new program to students in Business Law A.</p> <p>This decision involves running a supplementary program for students of non-English-speaking background with no background in Australian law. New materials required will be strongly linked to lectures given by mainstream lecturers in the subject. Classes in the department will follow up on the lectures and focus upon comprehension activities, English language development, and note-taking skills. Language development focuses upon the vocabulary of the discipline, together with the contextualisation of terms being studied. A discipline specific specialism is entailed.</p>	<p>(14.) A decision to authorise the administrative assistant to sign orders and requisitions.</p> <p>This decision involves new and broader functions and responsibilities being allocated to staff following the amalgamation process. Devolution of what were previously regarded as higher responsibilities are being moved down the line to support the wider developmental work of senior decision makers.</p>
<p>(15.) A decision by one member of staff in media studies to alter the content of colour slides used for a particular lecture in a course on photography.</p> <p>This decision involves scanning books and magazines for images that correspond to the lecture subject; and consideration of the students' degree of image literacy. The possible impacts of images also need to be considered.</p>	<p>(16.) A decision by the administrative assistant to attend certain courses of study for the purpose of keeping up with changes being implemented.</p> <p>This decision involves the VUT phasing out the word processing package Multimate and phasing in the Word Perfect system for use by students and staff. New skills are now required and two courses were attended this year on Word Perfect. These were taken in the faculty of business at the student village.</p>

<p>(17.) A decision by the receptionist to raise the question of some non-availability time given each day to allow catch up on required work which continually accumulates.</p>	<p>(18.) A decision by one member of staff in media studies to adopt and develop a consultative, collaborative, and interactive approach to photographing a client.</p>
<p>This decision involves striking a balance between recurrent duties: being readily available to provide assistance for document presentation and balancing this with achieving outputs in document production. The issue will be mentioned to the head of department and/or the head of the learning centre in the near future. Immediately following the move to the new location may be a the right time.</p>	<p>This decision involves a departure from traditional methods of work which proceed by attempting to find out what the client wants. Quite often the client does not know what they want. The new approach uses consultation in which alternatives are offered for consideration by the client, leading to a final decision on the nature of the image made by the practising photographer.</p>
<p>(19.) A decision to mainstream into the yearly cycle of programs a winter school program recently piloted by a small group of staff in the department.</p>	<p>(20.) A decision to hold a planning meeting about a new program to be developed: five to six week initial program offering: general English language classes; English for academic purposes; academic writing skills.</p>
<p>This decision oinvolved filling a gap that existed in teh support provision to NESB students in out-of-semester programs. It proposed a model for materials production and development which was repeatable in a number of discipline specific contexts. It has run three times. It was designed to allow new staff members to orient quickly to the program. Even discipline specific people could easily adapt the package. It is a vocabulary extension program based on the assumption that NESB students require appropriate schemata for spring-boarding into their respective academic programs.</p>	<p>This decision involves planning programs that will meet/ match student needs with staff availability and is very problematic. Newly appointed staff in this department have flexibility and practise a significant degree of autonomy in the development of programs tailored to meet the needs of their respective client departments. They elect to take one or more of the programs, considering students' needs for general English language programs. Balance is needed between group cohesion (learning together and from each other) and the benefits that accrue from growth away from the centre, looking outwards to their respective client departments.</p>

<p>(21.) A decision by the receptionist to record more detail in photographic orders taken in reception.</p>	<p>(22.) A decision by one member of staff in media studies to allocate personnel to a particular job on the St. Albans campus.</p>
<p>This decision involves three columns of information compiled on photographic orders taken in the reception area of the Department: Date of Order; Customer's Name; Order Type: develop and print; colour slide; enlargement; reprint; or black and white film. Should film go astray at Kodak, these sorts of details are requested to assist in the search. Internal requisitions for payment may be processed more accurately on the basis of this information.</p>	<p>This decision involves a response to a request for a photographic session from the St. Albans campus. Diary entries required checking for times available. A discussion was required on who will go. It was decided that two people would go and that the following Tuesday afternoon would be the time. Film and equipment were selected. The car was booked.</p>
<p>(23.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to rewrite/ extend/ expand the course material in nursing (bridging studies).</p>	<p>(24.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to give to certain students photocopied handout materials relevant to assignments in their programs.</p>
<p>This decision involves an earlier agreement to run the course again this year and a desire by the member of staff to continue to work on its development.</p>	<p>This decision involves an awareness of certain students' needs. Photocopies of chapters in books are provided to overcome peak time emptying of library shelves prior to certain assignments. Certain categories of students are at risk in this situation. Often overseas students become panicked at the situation being out of control. The provision of these materials does not bypass the student's own research. They have already searched and found the shelves empty.</p>

<p>(25.) A decision by the receptionist to take steps to further secure the position occupied in the organization.</p>	<p>(26.) A decision to collaborate on academic publications with a member of staff in a department receiving service support.</p>
<p>This decision involves the ever-changing employment scene and the need for enhancement of qualifications and relevant skills. This can be done through attending such courses as word processing and desktop publishing; a short course on Word Perfect has been taken. Familiarisation with up-to-date software packages is continually required.</p> <p>Receptionist skills and functions also require constant review for the purpose of conveying the best possible impression to visitors to the EDD as well as having the requested information for queries in a form that is precise and up-to-date.</p>	<p>This decision entails a special relationship of trust and mutual support across disciplines: accepting separate boundaries of interest. Views on ways that people acquire language, for instance, are not shared by the collaborating party and the informant. A common resource of relevant research literature is being compiled. Differences in thinking styles are evident. One whole afternoon of discussion was required to agree on a strategy of review. The HOD gave input to the process and helped the two parties to be able to see how they in fact were thinking differently.</p>
<p>(27.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to agree to take a 'class talk' class during the following week.</p>	<p>(28.) A decision by the administrative assistant to contribute to ideas in planning the layout of spaces in the new location for the EDD.</p>
<p>This decision involves two other members of staff who appeared by the desk of the decision maker and explained the circumstances and how it might/might not be necessary to run the classes. An agreement was made.</p>	<p>This decision involves trying to get a separate room for word processing and related teaching, instead of this function being located in another person's office where cramped space and distractions from other work areas hamper teaching. The present arrangement of computer terminals in line along one wall at the back of an already crowded workroom allows individual tuition, but small group tuition requires a different arrangement of the physical space.</p>

<p>(29.) A decision by the receptionist to list ideas for planning layout of the reception area in the proposed new location: Building D.</p>	<p>(30.) A decision to relocate some of the EDD staff to work on an alternative campus.</p>
<p>This decision involves a direction to begin thinking about the ideal layout in the new location. There has been no further exchange of information at this point. Requests will probably be for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * a larger area to rectify the present cramped conditions, especially when the area is being used by two or three people at once; * better overnight security for the cash register and other valuables kept in the area; * retention of present items of equipment: computer, printer, typewriter, etc. 	<p>This decision involves the fact that EDD must be university-wide following the VUT amalgamation process. There are now 4 campuses: FOOTSCRAY, from Footscray Institute of Technology; WERRIBEE, from Gilbert Chandler Dairy Research Centre; MELTON, an entirely new construction, Teacher Education and TAFE; ST. ALBANS, from Western Institute of Technology. We are now expected to have a presence on each campus. What sort of presence is not yet clear: neither the type nor the size. Dissemination of knowledge and experience must occur.</p>
<p>(31.) A decision to delegate to a member of the support staff the function of compiling appropriate materials and drafting short letters of reply: to be signed by the staff member for the unit coordinator.</p>	<p>(32.) A decision to send a memo to all deans and heads of departments offering to address new staff to inform them of EDD's role on the Footscray campus.</p>
<p>This decision involves the streamlining of communication and the incorporation of support staff more closely into the central functions of the department. A skills development opportunity for support staff is being utilised, with the intention of optimising ownership of functions and development of specific responsibilities. Both support and feedback to support staff on their work roles and functions will be enhanced.</p>	<p>This decision involves the question of adequate publicity: information dissemination: to function as pro-actively as possible: and in order to react to requests. Because of widespread acceptance of the new university status following amalgamation across four campuses a precursive decision has been taken that human resource people are to report only on university-wide issues in the interests of the generation of a feeling of unity across the university.</p>

<p>(33.) A decision to employ another member of staff to assist in running programs for business/ law.</p>	<p>(34.) A decision to build up the workload at Western Hospital in order to lend more weight to priorities in that direction.</p>
<p>This decision involves a response to an increase in demand for help from students in the faculty of business/ law. In the first semester of 1991 there was a doubling of enrolment in faculty programs in business/ law A and B and a commensurate increase in demand for support services offered by this department. Chaos occurred on some occasions when booked rooms were too small for the students wishing to attend.</p>	<p>This decision involves attempts to strike a balance of professional commitments between two work sites. Work at VUT is pre-booked, whereas work at Western Hospital is spontaneous and unpredictable. More people there need to be made aware of possible services available in photographic and related materials design resources.</p>
<p>(35.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to have a meeting with an accounting and economics tutor concerning arrangements for orientation week.</p>	<p>(36.) A decision to develop an appropriate layout of the new EDD facilities.</p>
<p>This decision involves the culmination of a few "one-off" conversations with the two people concerned that led to a decision to request a firm meeting between the three individuals concerned. It took one conversation and two phone calls to organise - on a Monday morning.</p>	<p>This decision involves leaving this old building and bringing the whole Learning Centre together (including the staff in the Peter Street Annexe) in a new location in D Building; which at the moment is empty on three levels. The preference at this stage is for the fifth level contiguous with Teacher Education. Following the decision on location there will be decisions on the physical layout. The coordinator of the maths and science project is presently responsible for surveying people's needs. The decision has been slipped back to August (1992).</p>

<p>(37.) A decision to discuss with a member of the teaching staff in the department the idea of a short course (three to five days) for engineering students.</p>	<p>(38.) A decision by one member of staff to limit the topic of an academic research project: to investigate the phenomenon of mathematics anxiety in the mature-age student.</p>
<p>This decision involves meeting current areas of need. Engineers recently reported well on a short course in essay writing. However a course could be constructed that is more tailored to their needs: technical writing; structuring of materials: abstracts/ headings, sub-headings/ engineering conventions in referencing, presentation styles, nomenclature.</p>	<p>This decision involves having access to students in a particular category being studied. The topic - mathematics anxiety - is a phenomenon often encountered in mature-age students studying on this campus. A successful study could contribute significantly to effective teaching on campus.</p>
<p>(39.) A decision to remain on a fence between two professional fields of development: the VUT and its areas of academic work and the Western Hospital and its areas of academic work.</p>	<p>(40.) A decision to have titles for a video compiled on new equipment at the St. Albans campus.</p>
<p>This decision involves accepting that perceived needs for an increase of space, funds and resources will not be forthcoming in the near future. While both sides of the fence afford their own attractions: a stimulating interpersonal and academic environment at VUT with prospects for some teaching in the future; and a stimulating photographic and technological environment at Western Hospital with prospects for the establishment of a department in the field at some time in the future, the member of staff does not wish to lose touch with either.</p>	<p>This decision involved a member of staff travelling to the St. Albans campus for the purpose of completing the job. It was necessary to monitor the completion of the task. There was some discussion in meetings to determine the suitability of the equipment. There will be further opportunities to work with people on that campus.</p>

<p>(41.) A decision to finalise the location of EDD in the new amalgamated university.</p>	<p>(42.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to incorporate an article on the problem of plagiarism in writing in a teaching program.</p>
<p>This decision involves locating EDD as an academic unit within the structure of the university. It was brought about largely because the newly appointed Vice Chancellor was against the idea of the department remaining as an independent unit. There are three options being considered: -the department would be incorporated into Teacher Education; -the department would be incorporated into the Student Union; -the department would be incorporated into an academic faculty as an independent department. The third option would emphasise the academic nature and functions of the department and be most favourable.</p>	<p>This decision involved the member of staff finding a newspaper article alerting readers to the problem of plagiarism in a professional area. An academic article: <u>Paraphrasing and Plagiarism</u> was then identified for use with students in class work. Referencing is required even when ideas are rewritten using different terminology from the material in the source: a frequent oversight made by students.</p>
<p>(43.) A decision by the Pro-Vice Chancellor to allocate the petty cash management duties to the administrative assistant.</p>	<p>(44.) A decision by one member of staff to approach another member of staff in the department to act as mentor for the purposes of guidance in studies for the Graduate Diploma in Education undertaken in another institute.</p>
<p>As the assistant to the head of department, this member of staff is to have more responsibilities following amalgamation. The new directive was outlined in the Finance Manual.</p>	<p>This decision involves pressure for increasing qualifications, together with a request by lecturers conducting the course that students seek a mentor as part of course requirements. The mentorship was readily agreed to by a colleague in EDD.</p>

<p>(45.) A decision to encourage conference attendance by EDD staff.</p>	<p>(46.) A decision by two members of staff in the learning centre not to cancel classes for individual consultations in the final week prior to an assignment due date; but instead to hold classes as usual for group consultations on common problems about essays.</p>
<p>This decision involves the management of a limited budget, and encouragement from the head of department for all members of staff to attend at least one conference per year. Also, the academic profile of the department needs to be raised. If people are able to work outside the department for payment, the process is enhanced. They can use those funds for the purpose of attendance at conferences. Members of staff have already funded their attendance at conferences in this way.</p>	<p>This decision involves an awareness of student needs. Group consultations are considered more equitable because there are those who "won't step out of their skins to ask for an appointment". Strategies for reaching shy students need to be developed.</p>
<p>(47.) A decision by one member of staff in media studies to list the tasks/ functions/ responsibilities to be taken alone by a member of staff new to the department.</p>	<p>(48.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to agree to consult on a series of assignments with a third year student whose work is in a different discipline area.</p>
<p>This decision involves an assessment of the complexities of particular jobs such as photography shoots: "one-of" jobs. Typical complexities are: number of people required; amount of equipment; type of equipment such as colour/black-and-white; the nature of the final product; the target audience of the material produced. The newcomer's prior knowledge of the client and the task/equipment will influence allocation to sole responsibility for the job.</p>	<p>This decision involved the student making an approach to EDD and the member of staff being nominated. During discussions with the coordinator of academic skills and language learning, it was revealed that the member of staff usually responsible for students in the discipline area concerned was fully booked.</p>

<p>(49.) A decision by the administrative assistant to agree to work on the St Albans campus as well as on the Footscray campus.</p>	<p>(50.) A decision by one member of staff in the learning centre to shorten initial consultation times with students commencing their preparations for essays and assignments.</p>
<p>This decision involves agreeing to meet with people at the St Albans campus who do similar work to members of staff in EDD at Footscray. Discussion is required on the further development of work skills. There is a need to see whether certain broader functions that go beyond secretarial services at Footscray:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuition of students in word processing; design and production of materials in desktop publication; <p>could be developed fruitfully at St Albans.</p>	<p>This decision involves the need to make students aware of what the process should involve and what it should not involve. Students usually come to this decision themselves after some discussion of the process of work preparation recommended by the learning centre. Longer consultations are best taken after the student has completed a number of early data gathering activities.</p>
<p>(51.) A decision to carry out some work in another faculty on campus - to reciprocate an approach already made.</p>	
<p>This decision involved the movement of support services to this department for the first time. A different model of support was required. Not a replication of an existing model, a new departure was required. Applied sciences rather than humanities were involved (the two languages): so that teaching models in law were quite distinct. This new project links the academic environment and industrial settings. There are explicit connections with industry training.</p>	