

Thoughts in Search of a Thinker, so We May Think



*I can live with doubt and uncertainty
and not knowing*

*I think it is much more interesting to
live not knowing than to have
answers that might be wrong*

*We should not become enthusiastic
for the fact, the knowledge, the
absolute truth of the day, but remain
always uncertain*

*In order to make progress, one must
leave the door to the unknown ajar*



Aims

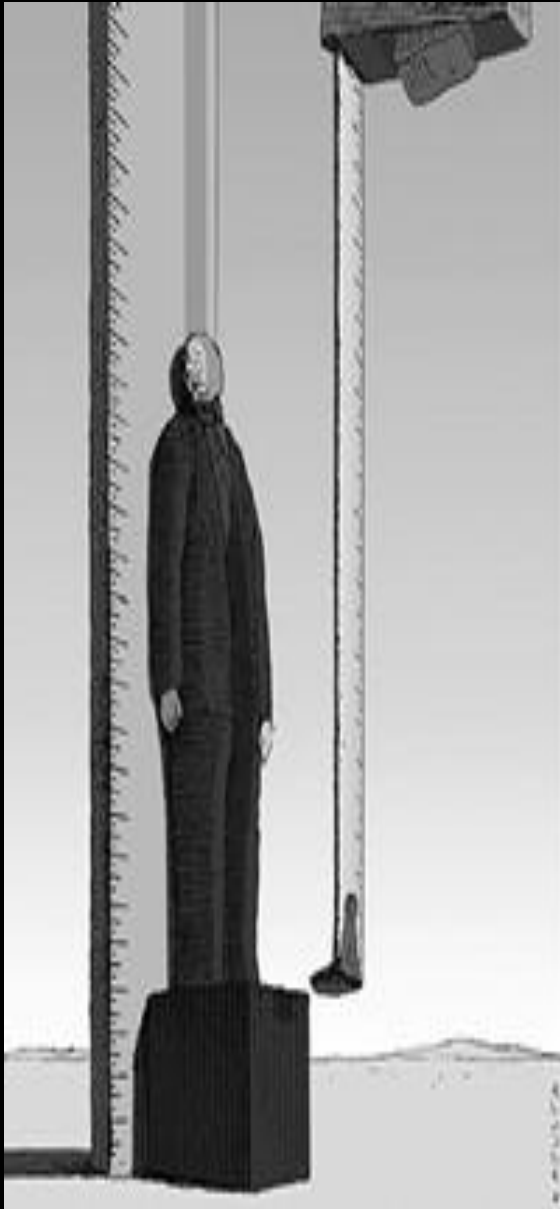
To explore the relationship between knowledge production, storage and accessibility and the development of knowing

Bion

Bush

Warne and McAndrew





Caveats:

I see the UK public sector increasingly characterised by:

A Foucauldian governance

An Audit culture and the rise of the Calibrated organisation

Rhetorical professional practice and the panacea of EBHC

The economy of performance versus ecology of practice

The process steps of evidence-based practice involves:



- *formulation of an answerable question to address a specific patient problem*
- *systematic searching for the research evidence (to answer the question)*
- *appraisal of the validity, relevance and applicability of the research evidence*
- *integration of the research evidence with other information that might influence the management of the patient's problems*
- *implementation of the evidence-based practice decision*
- *evaluation of the outcome of the decision*

Partly an approach which assumes that there is a linear relationship between research, knowledge and change ...

...or a question defined, research undertaken and knowledge and learning occurring as a consequence...



...and researchers are **busy** filling shelves with a comprehensive set of all the possible relevant studies that a teacher or student might some day, drop by to read...

...and then use!

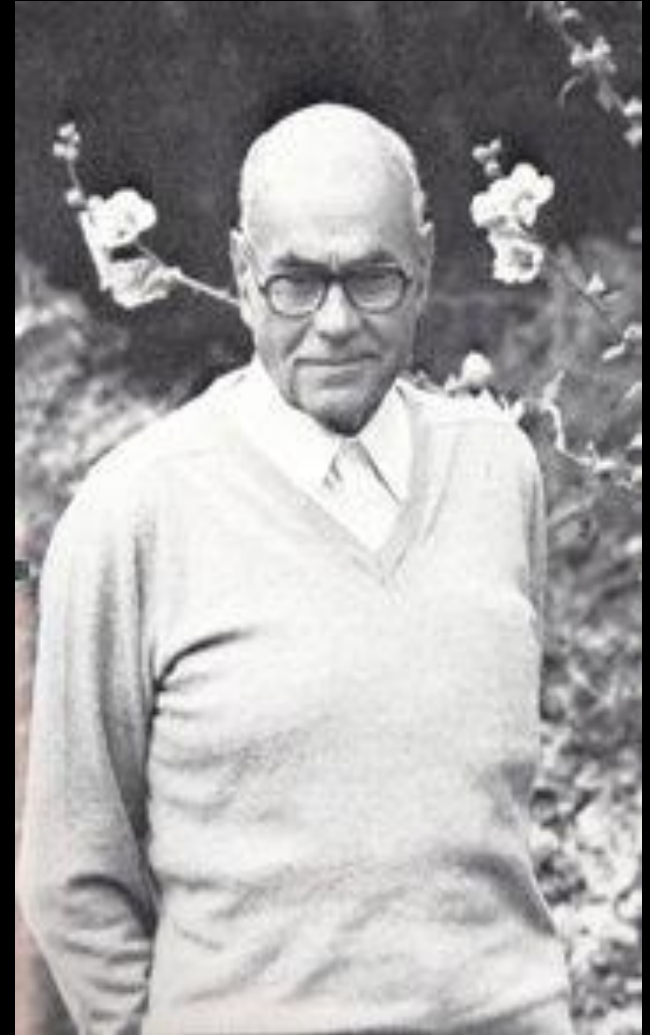
Wilfred Bion

Trained with Melanie Klein but eventually departed from both Kleinian and Freudian theory training

His theories were always based in the phenomena of the analytic encounter

Well known outside of the psychoanalytic community for his work on group dynamics

This paper draws upon his theory of thinking and the development of a capacity for thought



Bion argued the very capacity to think develops from the child's experience of **no-thing** which, if well enough contained, can become a thought



Bion noted that *'the mind grows through exposure to truth'* meaning - the ability to act more consistently and rigorously in relation to truth

This truth is the **imminent** reality of anything whatsoever or truth-in-the-moment.



Our* version of Bion's assumption about the effects of exposure to truth is that learning comes from working at the edge between knowing and not-knowing.

learning, or *growth of mind* - involves exposure to truth-in-the-moment depends on the individuals capacity to stay at the edge between knowing and not-knowing



Our students want us to **know** because this takes the responsibility and anxiety of not-knowing away from them

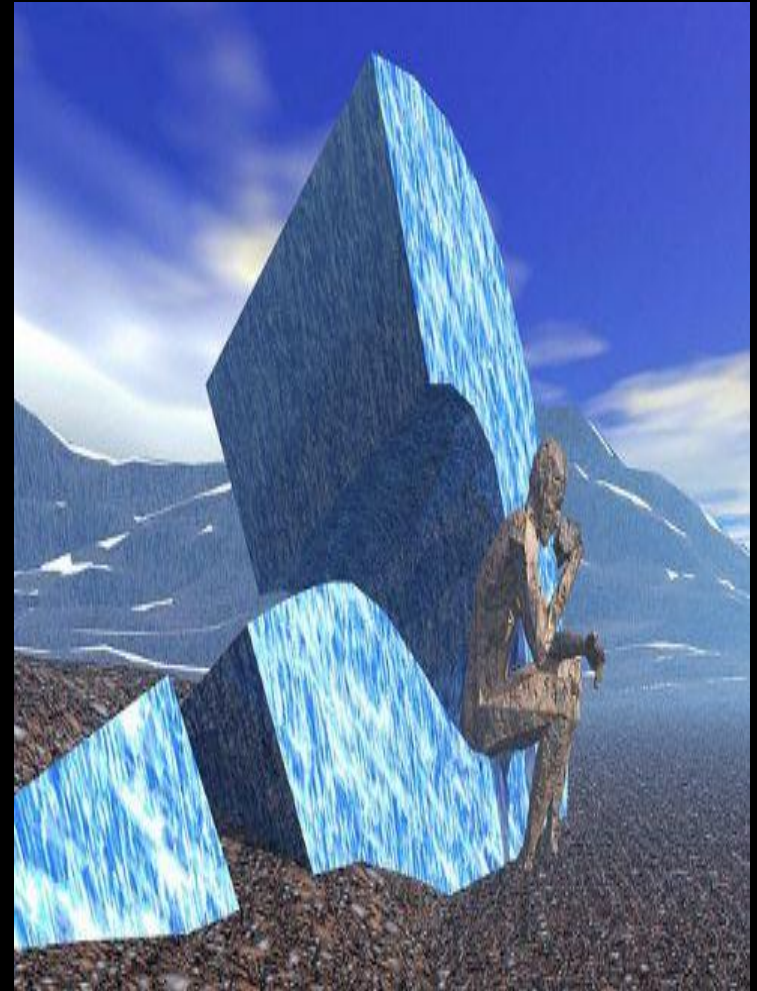
But, the truth is that in many situations we do not know what others require us to know

What all parties need is not knowledge, but something not known



[in the pressure of the moment] what we thought we knew, or did indeed know once, disappears in action

we often simply do not know what we know





However, **not-knowing** leaves a space empty for new insight, as long as we can deal adequately with the way in which our fear of this emptiness drives us to fill it with knowing

Whilst the uncertainty created at the edge between knowing and not-knowing can be exciting and can provoke significant learning....

...it is often unsettling and anxiety-provoking....

...it can inspire a sense of incompetence, fear and loss of control, and can obliterate all sense of role and identity and of the task in hand





Forgetting the importance of what we have called the **edge** and where the importance of not-knowing is ignored, then it is knowing that is the primary casualty

If we cannot see that we do not know what we are doing, then we risk failing to take account of what we **do** know.

In 1945, Vannevar Bush published an article in the Atlantic Monthly called, '*As We may Think*'

His aim was to influence *thinking regarding science in the modern world* and in particular...

...to promote the idea of the automation or augmentation of human thought

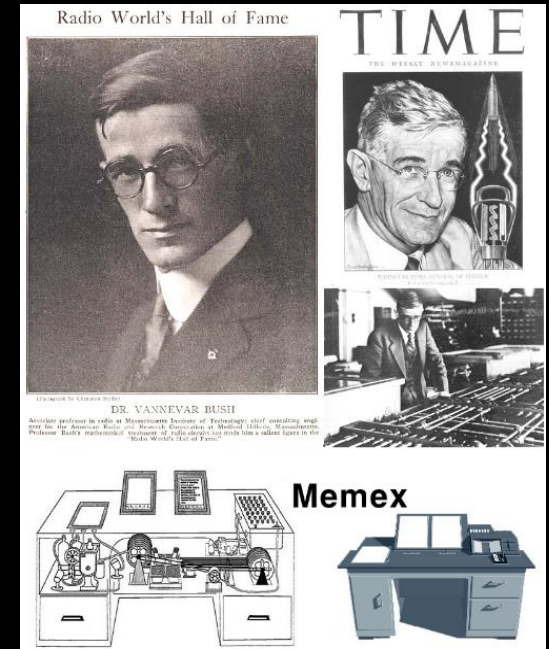


In the article he describes a theoretical machine called a **memex**

The machine extended the powers of human memory and association

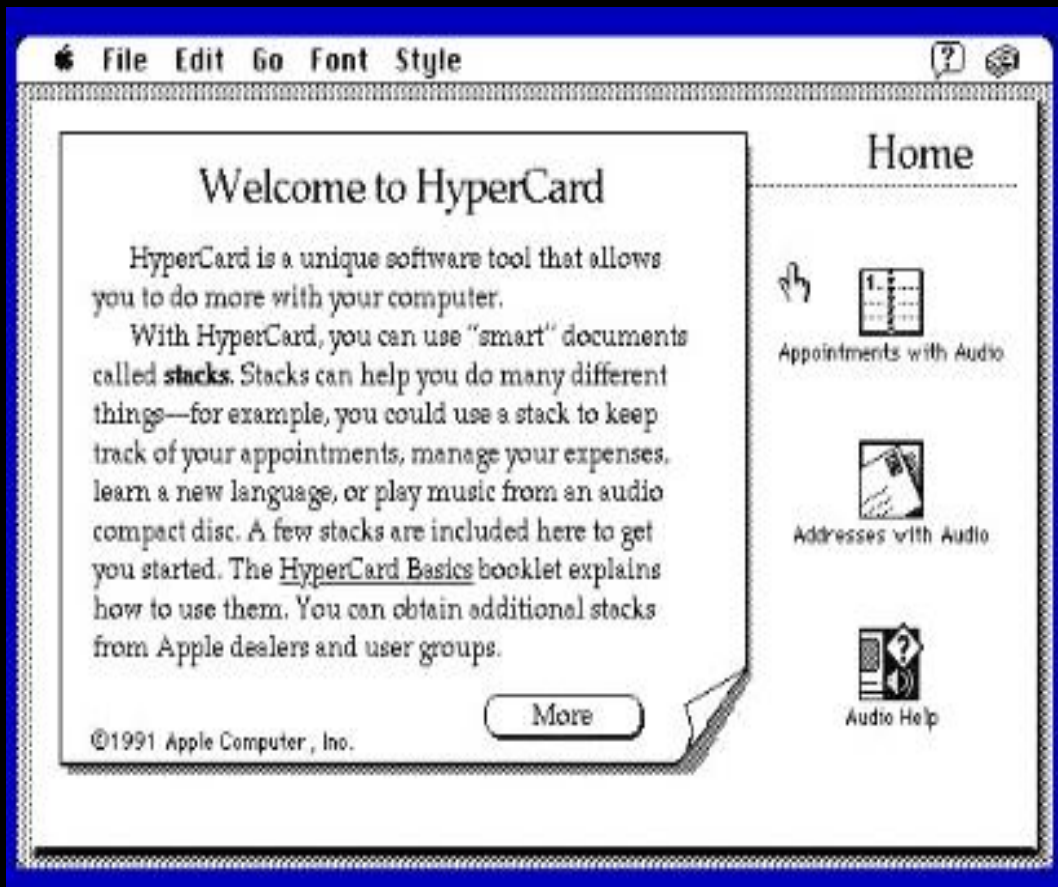
Just as the human mind forms memories through associations, the user of the memex would be able to make links between documents

Bush envisioned it as a universal library, relying on microfilm to store vast amounts of text, crammed onto a desktop



Bearing a striking resemblance to the personal computer, the **memex** promised the added benefit of letting its owner link together disparate pieces of information, thus automating a process of retrieving associated ideas and data.





This system is remarkably similar to modern hypertext...

...a term coined by Ted Nelson in 1960

Vannevar Bush died on June 30, 1974...

...many years before the Internet became widely popular or the World Wide Web even existed

The birth of the PC in the mid-1970s brought Bush renewed attention

Software designers embraced and utilised Bush's ideas of associative trails

The rise of the Internet cemented Bush's reputation as a prophet of **cyberculture**



The Digital Library

No physical boundary

Round the clock availability

Multiple access

Information retrieval

Preservation and conservation

Added value



USIR – 1st Jan 2010 - 100th institution to become an Open Access University

Over 16000 pages viewed

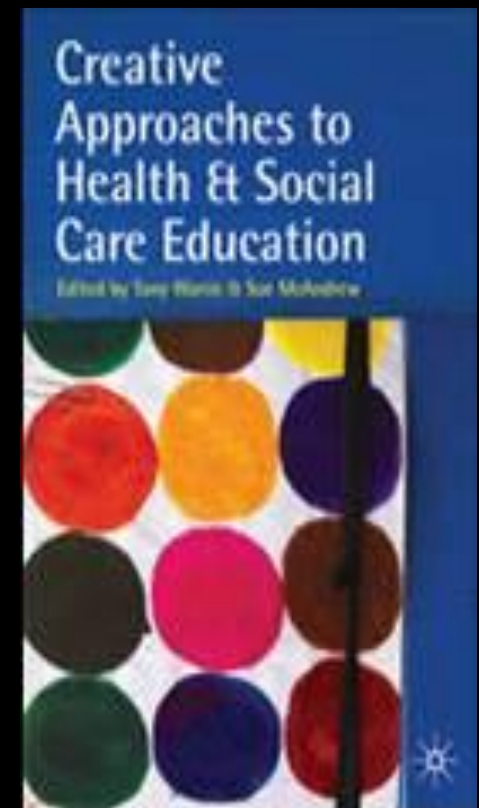
55% from UK, 25% Ireland, 20% RoW

65% hits from search engines, 15% direct hits



In the context of acquiring and utilising knowledge for practice, *emotion* and *learning* are interrelated, interactive and interdependent aspects of both individual functioning and professional practice

Emotion and learning in combination, are powerful sources of meaning and direction, supporting or inhibiting individual attempts to [re]define reality and their place within it



Solicitors, Service Users and Concrete Sheep
Three foxes and Pearl Harbour
Kangaroos, Wise Men and Chocolate
Post Modern Penguins, Performance
Management and Palins Fence
Totems in Turku and the Immaculately
Coiffured in Glazebury
Suicide, Durkheim, Foucault, and the Joys of
Teaching
The Lambs of Silence, Keira Knightley and a
Cocaine Chicken
Meeting Bin Laden, Pigs and Badgers and
leaving for China
Willie Nelson and Rod Stewart come
together for the nurse genome project: Ob-la
di, Ob-la-da – life goes on



<http://tonywarne.blogspot.com/>

For both the student and the tutor, experiential, interactive and intersubjective learning activities can provide opportunities for self-discovery...

...and an increased understanding of personal meaning



Such a task could be seen as akin to Bion's notion of thoughts searching for a thinker...

...the unconscious encompassing transformations that may occur on the edges of the unknown...

...harnessing new knowledge holding technologies to do so





Thank You

For further information please
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