

Passion for ignorance

The importance of Bad practice in EE/ESD

*“There are known knowns; there are things we know that we know.
There are known unknowns; that is to say, there are things that we now know we don't know. But
there are also unknown unknowns – there are things we do not know we don't know.”*

—United States Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld

Taking the above quote from Rumsfeld, Slavoj Žižek extrapolates from these three categories a fourth, the *unknown known*, that which we intentionally refuse to acknowledge that we know: *If Rumsfeld thinks that the main dangers in the confrontation with Iraq were the "unknown unknowns", that is, the threats from Saddam whose nature we cannot even suspect, then the Abu Ghraib scandal shows that the main dangers lie in the "unknown knowns" – the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our public values.*

Inspired by neo-lacanian theorists such as Slavoj Žižek and Renata Salecl I want to apply this focus, on the unknown knowns, the things that we ignore to know in understanding the role of this in EE and ESD. The rising number of “climate-skeptics” in the US, scrapping of taxes on carbon polluters in Australia, all in the face of solid evidence for rising global temperatures, raises the issue of how we as individual subjects deal with issues, notions and concepts that does not fit into your lives. Drawing on my dissertation and my work on the notion of Bad practice in EE/ESD I will delve into the matter of how we, as individual learners (and researchers), construct meaning when confronting the normative ideals that underpin EE/ESD.

I would like to spend some time outlining my use of Lacanian theories within the field of non-formal EE/ESD and the potential of using psychoanalytical concepts like *jouissance*, desire, disavowal, interpassivity when trying to push the envelope of EE/ESD. I look forward to discussing these ideas with all of you. They are still very much emerging thoughts, firmly embedded within my interest for the importance of ignorance, not knowing, both in EE/ESD practice and as a research focus.

All the best
Jonas

