

Research in Action Podcast Instructor Guide

Use the following episode description, learning objectives, guiding questions and activity suggestions to more easily include “Research in Action” podcast episodes as a supplemental resource for your course.

Dr. Ethan McMahan on Researching Happiness [33:23]

Research in Action - Episode 62

Podcast and Episode Information

“Research in Action” is a weekly podcast about topics and issues related to research in higher education featuring experts across a range of disciplines.

On this episode of the podcast, the guest is Dr. Ethan McMahan, an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Western Oregon University. His research interests focus on hedonic and eudaimonic approaches to well-being, folk conceptions of happiness, and the relationship between nature and human well-being. His recent work examines how exposure to immersive simulations of natural environments impacts concurrent emotional state and, more broadly, how regular contact with natural environments may be one route by which individuals achieve optimal feeling and functioning. He has published in the *Journal of Positive Psychology*, the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, and *Ecopsychology*, among other publications. He completed his undergraduate training at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and holds a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of Wyoming.

Segment One [00:00-18:21] - In this segment, Ethan describes the instruments researchers use to measure happiness.

Segment Two [18:21-33:23] - In this segment, Ethan shares strategies that researchers can use to be happier.

Bonus Clip [00:00-05:03]: How Ethan Got Started as a Happiness Researcher

Show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at:

<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/research/podcast/e62/>

Learning Outcomes

By listening to this episode, students will be able to:

- Describe how components of happiness can be measured for research
- Provides examples of implicit and explicit measures of emotion
- Discuss some of Dr. McMahan’s findings about the relationship of happiness and natural environments
- Review Dr. McMahan’s suggestions for researchers regarding happiness

Guiding Questions for Listening

- According to Dr. McMahan, why is the term *happiness* an ill-defined term?
- According to Dr. McMahan, how can certain components of happiness be measured in research?
- What is an example of an explicit measure of emotion?
- According to some of Dr. McMahan’s research findings, what did people tend to believe about happiness and pain?
- What trends does Dr. McMahan explain empirical literature has found about the relationship between natural environments and happiness?
- What has Dr. McMahan discovered in his own research about the relationship of happiness and natural environments?
- What are some of Dr. McMahan’s suggestions for researchers regarding happiness?
- According to Dr. McMahan, why does he think there is a complicated relationship between stress and happiness?
- What led Dr. McMahan to researching happiness? (See also, Bonus Clip)

Possible Activities

- Ask students to visit the show notes for this episode (<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/research/podcast/e62/>) and look at an additional resource that is linked in connection with this episode. Students can write a short review of that resource to share with their peers.
- Ask students to visit the show notes for this episode (<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/research/podcast/e62/>) and post an additional resource connected to the content of the episode in the comments section.
- Have students share questions that are raised for them based on the content of this episode. What would they ask Dr. Ethan McMahan if they could?

Suggested Citation (APA, 6th edition)

Linder, K. (Producer/host). (2017, June 5). *Dr. Ethan McMahan on Researching Happiness* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/research/podcast/e62/>

Notes

About the Research in Action Podcast

“Research in Action” (RIA) is a podcast about topics and issues related to research in higher education featuring experts across a range of disciplines. Episodes are posted weekly and include guest interviews and occasional solo episodes. Guests are from a range of higher education institutions and share their expertise on qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods as well as their personal experiences as researchers, research and writing practices, organizational and productivity strategies, and much more. Some weeks, bonus content will also be posted.

“Research in Action” is hosted by [Dr. Katie Linder](#), research director for Oregon State University Ecampus.

Visit the podcast website to view [show notes and transcripts for each episode](#), explore our [episode guide](#), learn more about how to [contact us](#), or [suggest a future guest or topic](#).

You may subscribe to the [“Research in Action” RSS feed](#) or access the podcast via [iTunes](#), [Soundcloud](#) or [Stitcher](#).

“Research in Action” is also listed on [MERLOT](#).

The “Research in Action” podcast is a resource funded by Oregon State University Ecampus – ranked top ten in the nation for online education two years running by U.S. News & World Report. OSU Ecampus has more than 45 degree programs and more than 1,000 classes online.

Contact

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