Preface for the Instructor

READING THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE IN PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY is designed as a book of readings for use in the personality course. It contains primary source material and is intended for use along with a primary textbook in either an introductory or advanced undergraduate level course. It is also be suitable for some graduate seminars in personality.

READING THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE is designed with three aims. First, like other such collections, it exposes students to primary sources in the field. Second, and more distinctively, the reader provides students with the pedagogical support necessary to fully appreciate the readings that are included. Third, the reader organizes both contemporary and historical readings for students in a simple, accessible, and comprehensible, fashion, suitable for use with a wide variety of textbooks.

The pedagogical support for the student is provided in four ways: (1) choice of reading, (2) introduction to the reading, (3) commentary "alongside" the reading, and (4) study questions.

Exposing Students to a Range of Primary Sources

READING THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE is designed to expose students to between 5 and 9 key readings in the field of personality psychology. Included among the choices are: Contemporary theoretical articles, contemporary empirical studies, historical theoretical articles, miscellaneous writings, opinion pieces from Dialogue, the newsletter of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology, and humorous writings.

Selecting just a few readings creates two advantages: It keeps costs down and allows for a few key readings that are a bit longer. In the case of classic articles, in particular, length sometimes allows the reading to better "speak" to the student – and to provide enough of the work (as opposed to excerpting a brief piece of it) so that the student can better appreciate its style, purpose, and logic. For example, many reading books have substituted shorter but less accessible articles in place of the widely acknowledged historical classics. Thus, Erikson's "Eight stages of man" which is very readable and accessible has often been replaced by the far the less accessible "Identity and the life cycle." or "The life-cycle: Epigenesis of identity." (e.g., Frick, 1995; Friedman, & Schustack, 2001). Here, the longer pieces will be employed, and edited, in some cases, to keep them short.

Providing Support for the Reader

Reading primary sources in psychology is challenging for most undergraduates.

Across such sources, students can expect to wonder why they are reading a given piece, as well as to encounter foreign-seeming historical articles, contemporary mathematics, esoteric terms and jargon, tests with which they may be unfamiliar, and other hurdles.

READING THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE therefore provides pedagogical support for every reading so as to create an environment that promotes a series of successful reading experiences.

Introducing the Reading

The support for reading an article begins with the introduction to it.   Each introduction – although rarely exceeding a page and a half – will consist of three parts which will intertwine motivation, teaching, and preparation for the student.   The three parts are: (a) Significance of the Reading, (b) Context and Type of Reading, and (c) The Present Article.

    i)   <u>Significance of the Reading</u> will point out the reasons the specific selection was chosen for the book, and why it is of importance for psychology students to read. READING THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE explains the significance and searches out the context of the reading. In the case of historical articles, for example, the context of the article will be discussed, with appropriate citation to the documenting scholarship in the area.

    ii) <u>Context and Type of Reading</u> describes the context in which the article appears (journal, book, newsletter, etc), and the type of reading it is. Thus, the student is prepared ahead of time for whether the reading is historical or contemporary, theoretical or empirical, or whether it appeared in a journal or a book. That serves an important educational purpose of also teaching students what these sources are like.

    iii) <u>The Present Article</u> section will explain any additional information of interest surrounding a given selection.

    iv)

Guiding the Reader through the Article

The pedagogy then continues in the article itself, with a series of boxes appearing in the left hand portion of the page that tell the student how to cite the article, explain vocabulary, describe tests that have been employed, comment on statistical reports, and, in historical articles, explain some of the history of more unusual-seeming or out-of-date passages.

In addition, some selections will be pre-edited so that certain passages of more limited interest are deleted.

<u>Helping the Reader Consolidate Learning.</u> Finally, each article concludes with a review section that contains approximately five review points and questions that will help a student integrate and synthesize what she or he has read.

Organizing Readings in an Effective Manner

Readings are organized into four areas, which are central to the field of personality: (1) Introduction to psychology, (2) the parts of personality, (3) the organization of personality, and (4) personality development. This organization is a fairly new one, and is presently used in Mayer (forthcoming), and is based on the "Systems framework for personality" (Mayer, 1998). Variations of it have been employed in textbooks by Pervin, Cloninger, and others.

A great number of textbooks today use a different "big paradigm" or theory-by-theory design than the systems framework. The selections here can also be readily employed for theories books, in which case they can help expose students to basic readings while updating students in regard to what is happening in the field today. The book is a useful adjunct to big-paradigm book as well. Using these readings with big paradigm books can provide exposure to both the old and new readings, theoretical and empirical.