

From Green, C. D. (2021). Teaching the history of psychology. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 62, 400-408. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000294>

Foregoing word cloud from Chris Green's (2014) collection of worldwide tweets including the phrase "history of psychology" between Feb 10 and May 22, 2014: Some specific examples ...

- Who cares about history of psychology?
- It's no fun. It's not interesting.
- History of psychology: way worse than regular history.
- History of psychology makes me want to set myself on fire.
- Bored die me... history of psychology
- Today in the history of psychology... blah blah blah... Ok. Things happened. Whatever.
- DEATH TO HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY
- The fact that one of the studies in history of psychology was carried out by Boring (1950) says it all.

Green, C. D. (2014, June). Rockin' Robin don't like history of psych: 101 days on Twitter [Conference session]. Cheiron: The International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Hood College, Frederick, MD, United States.

So, how can we make the
history of our discipline less
boring?

SO, HOW CAN WE MAKE THE HISTORY OF OUR DISCIPLINE LESS BORING?

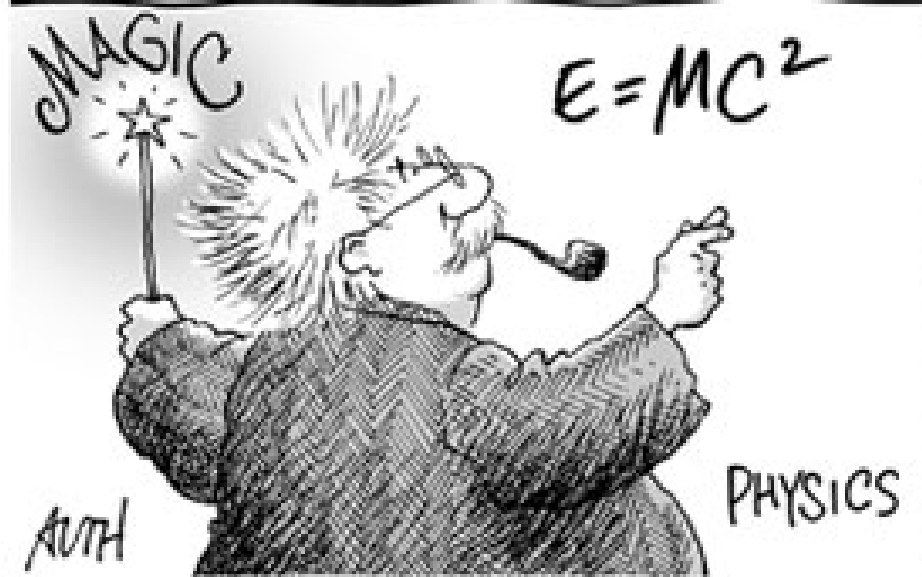
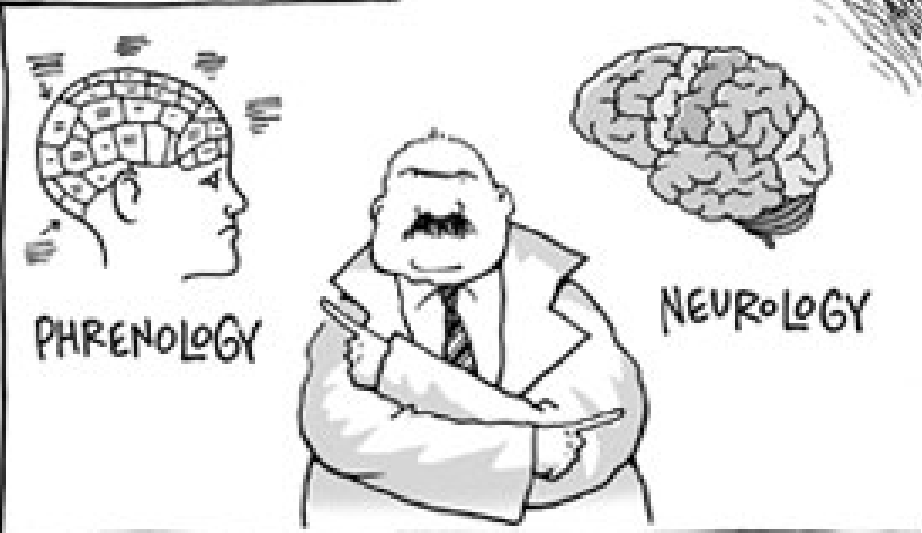
USE ATTENTION-GETTING DESIGNS, TRANSITIONS AND ANIMATIONS?



Again, how can we make the
history of our discipline less
boring?

Start our lectures with cartoons that connect
the day's topic with popular culture?

TEACH BOTH THEORIES... LET THE KIDS DECIDE.



For lecture on
the Pseudo-
Sciences
(Mesmerism
and Phrenology)

Plus glass
harmonica
music by
Mozart



8-4 US THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER. UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE.



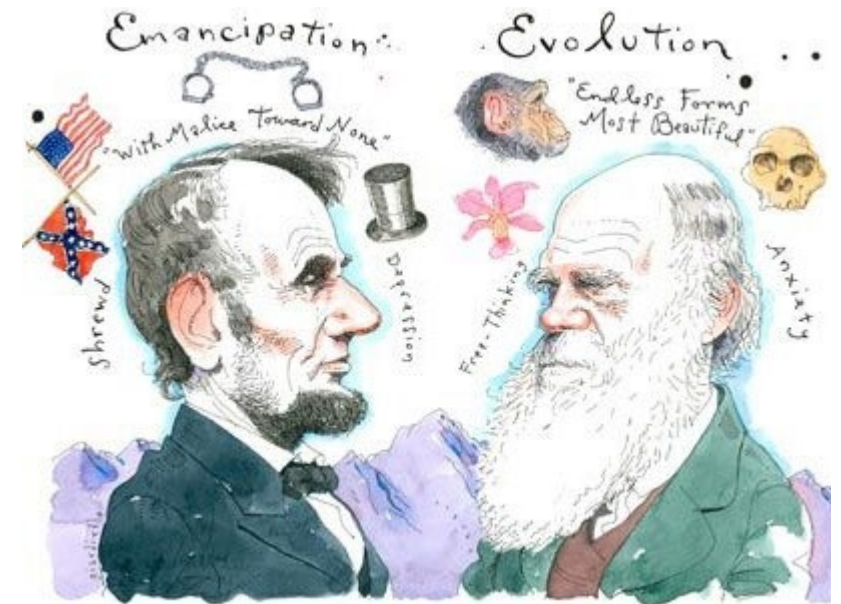
... or unpopular culture?

Again, how can we make the
history of our discipline less
e.g. regoriously *boring*?

Wear t-shirts that provoke curiosity about
their relevance to the day's lecture?



For lecture on
British Evolutionists
(especially Charles Darwin)



Both born February 12th 1809



For lecture on Pseudo-Sciences
(viz. Mesmer)



Quotation from 2006 Robert S. Daniel Award Citation (Society for the Teaching of Psychology, APA Division 2)

Another example of his innovative approaches is a trick he uses to inspire student interest in the day's topic. Each day, Dr. Simonton wears a t-shirt that illustrates some point or provides a broad theme for the day's lecture. A former teaching assistant wrote,

This tool is effective, not only as an illustrative measure, but it also sparks interest in the students. This is evidenced by the fact that students try to figure out how the t-shirt relates to the topic before the lecture even begins. Consequently, students are engaged, attentive, and are involved in every lecture.


Once more, how can we make
the history of our discipline less
boring?

And/or follow the advice of a historic psychology teacher?

“The genius of the interesting teacher consists in sympathetic divination of the sort of material with which the pupil’s mind is likely to be already spontaneously engaged, and in the ingenuity which discovers paths of connection from that material to the matters to be newly learned.”

- William James,

Talks to Teachers on Psychology, 1899



The History of Psychology and the Psychology of Science

An Instructive Integration

Ideal Course Requirements:

- Enrolls almost entirely senior psychology majors who have already taken numerous upper division “core” courses
 - E.g., cognitive, personality, developmental, and social
 - Perhaps billed as a “capstone” course for the psychology major
- Features a significant term paper assignment
 - Such as satisfying upper-division undergraduate “expository writing” requirement
- E.g. **PSC 185—History of Psychology (4)** Lecture—3 hour(s); Term Paper. Prerequisite(s): ... Upper division standing or consent of instructor. ... Development of psychological thought and research in context of history of philosophy and science. ... GE credit: SS, WE [GE = General Education, SS = Social Science, WE = Writing Experience].

Your grade in the course will be based on the following three assessments:

1. *Objective midterm exam (25%)* – A 50-question multiple-choice “Who Am I” test regarding your knowledge of the central figures and ideas in the history of the discipline, from the ancient Greeks to the beginning of the 20th century. For sample midterm, click [here](#). Please note that your own midterm will not have the exact same figures, albeit all of the major figures will be identical. But even for them the questions will seldom if ever be the same.

2. *Essay final exam (35%)* – An “open book, open notes” take-home essay exam that will require you to trace some key issue or debate in psychology from the ancient Greeks to the current day. For the issues or debates, click [here](#).

3. *Term paper (40%)* – A psychobiography of a major figure in psychology. Specifically, you will address the theme “was _____ a scientific genius?” from the standpoint of what we know about creativity in science.

1. For a sample paper, click [here](#).

2. For specific guidelines, click [here](#).

3. For grading criteria that will be applied to the paper, click [here](#).

4. For the most critical sections of *Creativity in Science*, click [here](#).

Basic assumption:

History never repeats itself, but ...

- “‘History never repeats itself but it rhymes,’ said Mark Twain”
 - John Robert Colombo, “A Said Poem” from *Neo Poems*, 1970
- “History never repeats itself, but the Kaleidoscopic combinations of the pictured present often seem to be constructed out of the broken fragments of antique legends.”
 - Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, 1873, Chapter 47
- “History never repeats itself, but those who contribute to history exhibit certain cognitive, developmental, personality, and social regularities as studied in psychological science.”
 - Me, here

But what are these regularities that students should look for?

Here are some examples from the Appendix in

Simonton, D. K. (1994). Scientific eminence, the history of psychology, and term paper topics: A metascience approach. *Teaching of Psychology, 21*, 169-171.

Term Paper Handout on the Typical Profile of Eminent Scientists

To guide your biographical search, I provide some questions that you should ask yourself when pouring through the information about the subject of your paper. You will not necessarily obtain answers to all questions, and you do not need to adhere to this particular order.

Developmental Psychology: Childhood

Background. What was his or her birth order? What kind of family was he or she born into in terms of socio-economic class, professional status of parents, diversity of their backgrounds, and so on? Was the family environment stable or unstable, traumatic or bland? For example, did your subject suffer the experience of orphanhood? Were there any role models available that guided him or her in the choice of occupation and domain of achievement? Was your person popular with peers or a loner? Any disabilities? Was he or she extremely precocious or talented early in childhood? Any instances of “crystallizing experiences” that launched the individual on a scientific career?

Developmental Psychology: Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Education. How well did your subject do in school? In college? What level of formal education did he or she attain? If a PhD or other higher degree was earned, was it received at an unusually young or old age? Were there any teachers who served a special mentor role in your person's intellectual or academic development? Was your subject's training marginal or central to the domain in which eminence was ultimately obtained? If an outsider, did that marginal background leave an impression on your subject's distinctive contribution?

Developmental Psychology: Maturity and Old Age

Career development. What kind of professional positions were occupied? For example, did he or she attain a professorship at a distinguished university? Did your subject establish connections with a considerable number of notable colleagues? Or was he or she professionally isolated? What about the number of students and followers? Collaborators or rivals? Did your subject receive any contemporary recognition, such as special honors or awards? In the individual's final years, did he or she become the defender of a newly established status quo, rejecting the innovative ideas that were to become important in the next generation?

Cognitive Psychology

Thought processes. Was your subject an intuitive thinker? Any examples of leaps of imagination or inspiration? Or was your subject extremely analytical and logical in approaching questions? Was there a sense of purpose, of destiny underlying his or her work? Was everything, no matter how diverse, connected by some central theme or preoccupation? What role did chance play? Any examples of serendipity?

Individual-differences Psychology: Cognitive and Dispositional

Personality. Was he or she highly intelligent, perhaps even possessing a “genius-level” intellect? Independent and nonconformist? Introverted? Risk taking? Hardworking, even workaholic? Did he or she have broad intellectual interests? Any evidence of psychopathology, such as manic depression, neurosis, or mild psychosis? Any instances of psychopathology in close relatives that might help explain your subject’s idiosyncrasies?

Individual-Differences Psychology: Prototypical Behaviors

Productivity. At what age did he or she first make a contribution to the field? Was this unusually young or old? At what age did your subject produce his or her single best work or “masterpiece”? Did this contribution come out at the typical age for the discipline? And at what age was the last contribution made? Was this at an exceptionally advanced age? What was the total number of works produced? How does this compare with what you would expect? Did the rate of productivity rise to some peak and then decline in a fashion you would anticipate or were there some surprises? Any instances of some “swan song”—some final work conceived shortly before death that encapsulated in a distinctive manner the entire course of a career? How influential were your subject’s works in that person’s own time and in later generations? Any disastrous mistakes that exerted a profound influence on the discipline?

Social Psychology: Sociocultural Context

Zeitgeist. Did your subject fit in with the mood of the times? Or was your person ahead of the zeitgeist? Were your subject's ideas rejected by contemporaries so that he or she experienced an uphill fight to fame? Or did celebrity status come easily? Can you identify any examples of multiples? That is, did anyone else come up with the same ideas as your subject at roughly the same time? Finally, what were the general economic, political, social, and cultural conditions in which your subject worked? Economic prosperity? Peace or war? Political or ethnic oppression? Did the general milieu help or hinder your person in achieving greatness?

Social Psychology: Personal Influence

Final influence. What was your subject's ultimate impact in making psychology a legitimate science? Did he or she move the field forward, placing the discipline closer to other recognized sciences? Or was your subject's effect on the field negative, lowering our discipline's status as a science? Did your subject even aspire to make psychology a science? In answering this last question, please be clear what you mean by a *science*. Do you mean a natural or exact science? Or do you mean a human science? If the former, what criteria do you use to define a *hard science*? Empiricism? Mathematics or quantification? Theoretical rigor? Falsifiability? If you mean a *soft science*, then by what criteria do you judge whether someone has made a scientific advance?

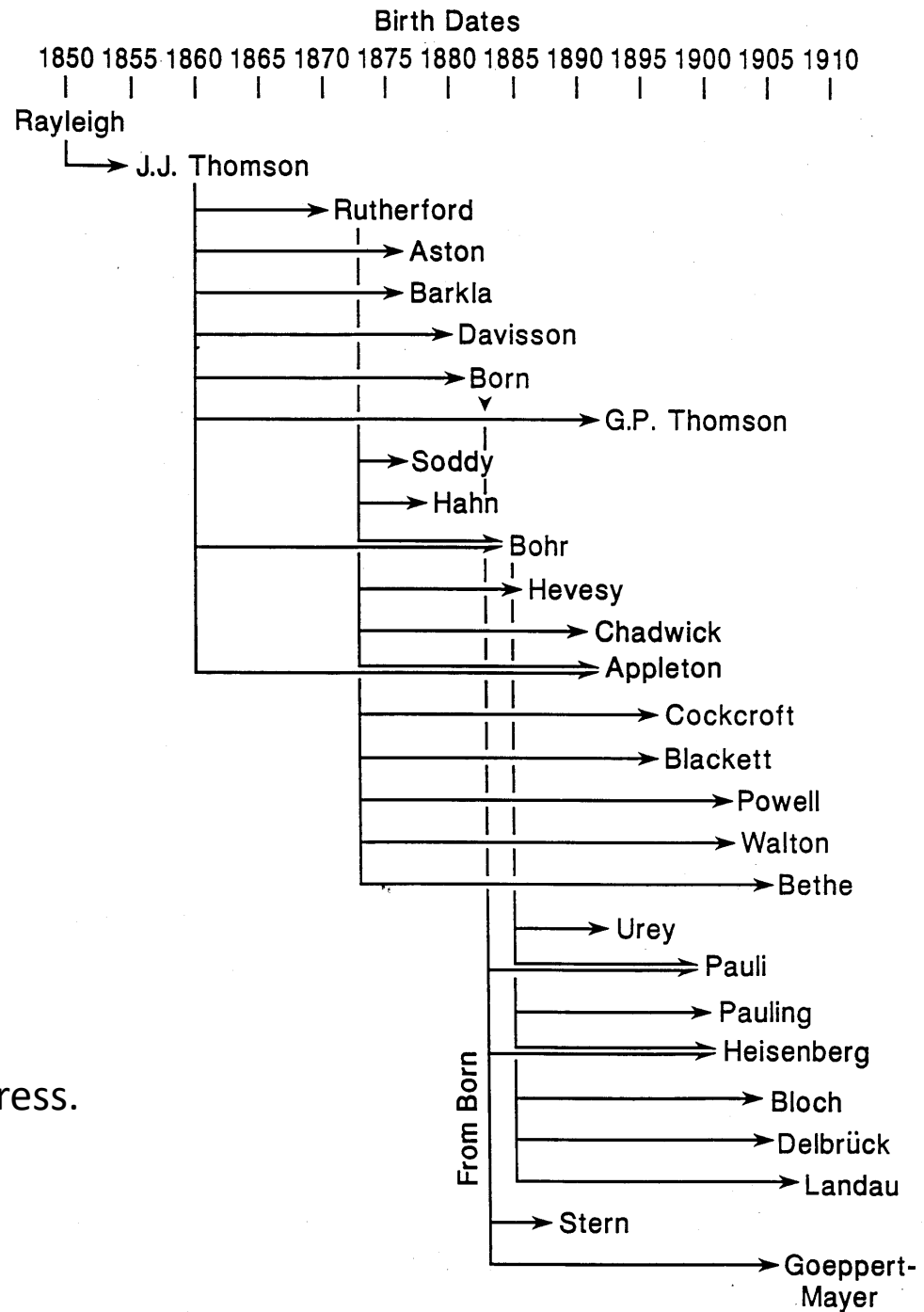
In addressing the foregoing questions, please remember to make explicit what your answers tell us about the fundamental theme of your essay—whether or not your individual fits the profile of a “scientific genius.”

Theoretical and Methodological Psychology: Caveats

In making these linkages, remember that I don't expect a simple yes/no vote. Your subject may fit the typical picture according to some criteria but depart from the profile according to other criteria. For instance, some of you may be dealing with someone whose genius took an artistic turn. Others of you may be studying a scientist who attained eminence for achievements that required no genuine creativity. Even within science, we can distinguish between practitioners of “revolutionary” versus “normal” science or between classical and romantic scientists. So be flexible. The portrait of your subject will most likely be painted in diverse shades of gray rather than in black and white.

But how does the student know what these biographical facts imply regarding their thesis?

- An assigned supplementary text, such as:
 - Simonton, D. K. (1988). *Scientific genius: A psychology of science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - Simonton, D. K. (2004). *Creativity in science: Chance, logic, genius, and zeitgeist*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- An entire lecture devoted to the cognitive, personality, developmental, and social factors associated with achieved eminence in scientific disciplines, including how to become a high-impact psychologist
 - To illustrate ... eminent scientists tend to earn their doctorates under eminent scientists



Specific Illustration:

Nobel laureates who studied under previous Nobel laureates

Reconfigured from

Zuckerman, H. (1977). *Scientific elite*. New York: Free Press.

Or within psychology:

Boring, M. D., & Boring, E. G. (1948). Masters and pupils among the American psychologists. *American Journal of Psychology*, 61, 527-534.

TABLE I

PSYCHOLOGISTS AND THEIR TEACHERS

Eighty-four pupils who came under the principal influence of a single teacher in the formative period up to the time of the Ph.D. The pupil's name comes first, the teacher's second.

(The pupils are listed in the order of the dates of their Ph.D.s or equivalents).

H. H. Donaldson—G. S. Hall	R. M. Ogden—O. Külpe
Hugo Münsterberg—W. Wundt	J. B. Watson—J. R. Angell
J. McK. Cattell—W. Wundt	Max Wertheimer—O. Külpe
Joseph Jastrow—G. S. Hall	Bird T. Baldwin—H. Münsterberg
H. K. Wolfe—W. Wundt	H. A. Carr—J. R. Angell
G. T. Patrick—G. S. Hall	Arnold Gesell—G. S. Hall
E. C. Sanford—G. S. Hall	Daniel Starch—C. E. Seashore
Frank Angell—W. Wundt	F. L. Wells—J. McK. Cattell
E. B. Delabarre—H. Münsterberg	June E. Downey—J. R. Angell
Livingston Farrand—J. McK. Cattell	Joseph Peterson—J. R. Angell
Herbert Nichols—G. S. Hall	W. V. Bingham—J. R. Angell
E. A. Pace—W. Wundt	K. Koffka—K. Stumpf
E. W. Scripture—W. Wundt	C. E. Ferree—E. B. Titchener
W. L. Bryan—G. S. Hall	H. S. Langfeld—K. Stumpf
E. B. Titchener—W. Wundt	Herbert Woodrow—W. B. Pillsbury
Lightner Witmer—J. McK. Cattell	Rudolph Pintner—W. Wundt
M. W. Calkins—Wm. James	S. W. Fernberger—F. M. Urban
H. C. Warren—J. M. Baldwin	E. R. Guthrie—H. K. Wolfe

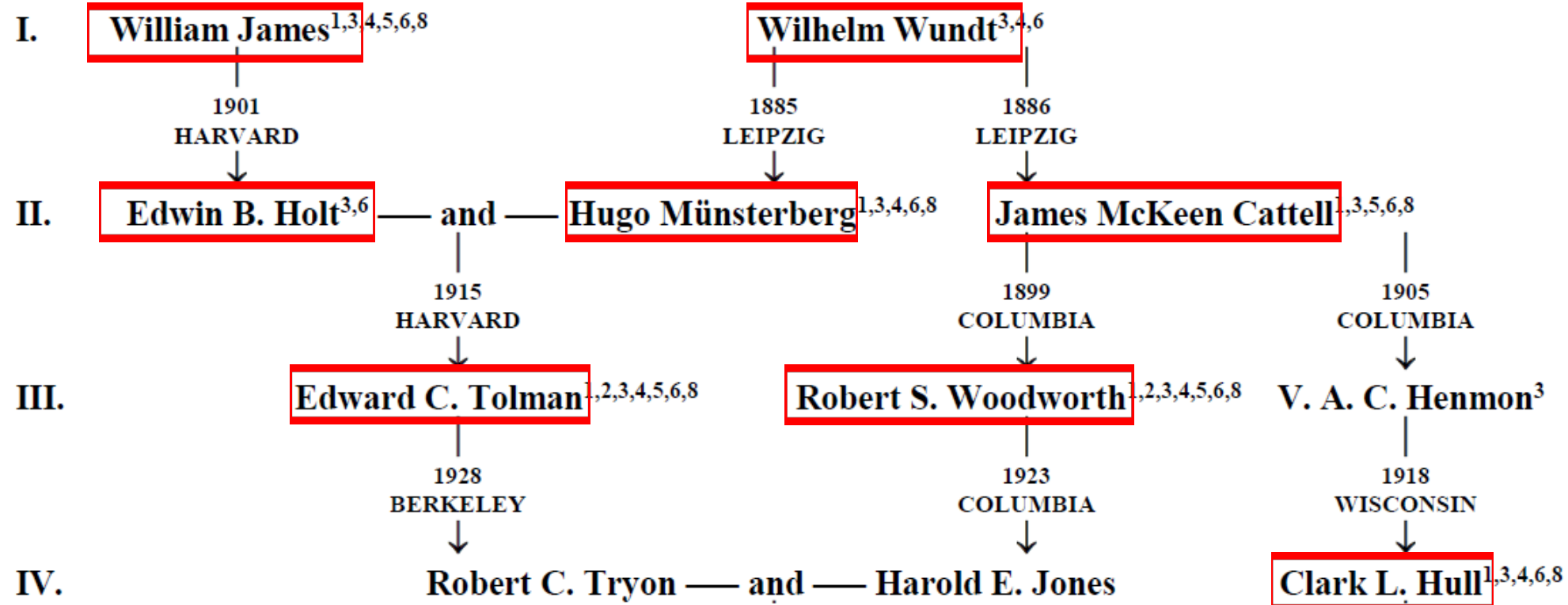
T. L. Bolton—G. S. Hall
M. F. Washburn—E. B. Titchener
J. H. Leuba—G. S. Hall
Robert MacDougall—H. Münsterberg
C. E. Seashore—E. W. Scripture
Raymond Dodge—B. Erdmann
C. H. Judd—W. Wundt
Max F. Meyer—K. Stumpf
E. H. Lindley—G. S. Hall
Boris Sidis—H. Münsterberg
E. D. Starbuck—G. S. Hall
Madison Bentley—H. K. Wolfe
L. J. Martin—G. E. Müller
E. L. Thorndike—Wm. James
S. I. Franz—J. McK. Cattell
H. H. Goddard—G. S. Hall
A. H. Pierce—H. Münsterberg
R. S. Woodworth—J. McK. Cattell
Walter Dill Scott—W. Wundt
H. T. Woolley—J. R. Angell
G. M. Whipple—E. B. Titchener
E. B. Holt—Wm. James
Ethel Puffer Howes—H. Münsterberg
Knight Dunlap—H. Münsterberg

K. M. Dallenbach—E. B. Titchener
J. F. Dashiell—J. McK. Cattell
W. R. Miles—C. E. Seashore
E. G. Boring—E. B. Titchener
T. L. Kelley—E. L. Thorndike
K. S. Lashley—J. B. Watson
Kurt Lewin—W. Köhler
Donald G. Paterson—R. Pintner
John E. Anderson—H. Münsterberg
Floyd H. Allport—E. B. Holt
C. P. Stone—M. E. Haggerty
M. S. Viteles—L. Witmer
Elmer Culler—H. A. Carr
H. E. Jones—R. S. Woodworth
Leonard Carmichael—W. F. Dearborn
Carney Landis—K. S. Lashley
J. A. McGeoch—H. A. Carr
E. G. Wever—E. G. Boring
J. P. Guilford—K. M. Dallenbach
C. F. Jacobsen—K. S. Lashley
R. C. Tryon—E. C. Tolman
B. F. Skinner—W. J. Crozier
D. G. Marquis—L. M. Terman
S. S. Stevens—E. G. Boring

But how does the student know what these biographical facts imply regarding their thesis?

- Plus useful tips are randomly scattered throughout every lecture
 - Most without any predictability because the tips are not included in the provided lecture notes (given that they obviously won't be tested on)
 - But sometimes explicitly planned to make a major point
 - e.g., the last two lectures in the course's first half are on Wundt and James
 - which provides the opportunity to illustrate scientific impact through mentoring

A Genealogy of Direct Doctoral Descent



IV.

Robert C. Tryon — and — Harold E. Jones

1947
BERKELEY

V.

Donald T. Campbell^{1,2,5,8,9}

1972
NORTHWESTERN

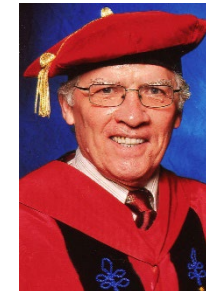
VI.

David A. Kenny^{2,8,9} — and — David C. McClelland^{2,7,8}

1975
HARVARD

VII.

Dean Keith Simonton

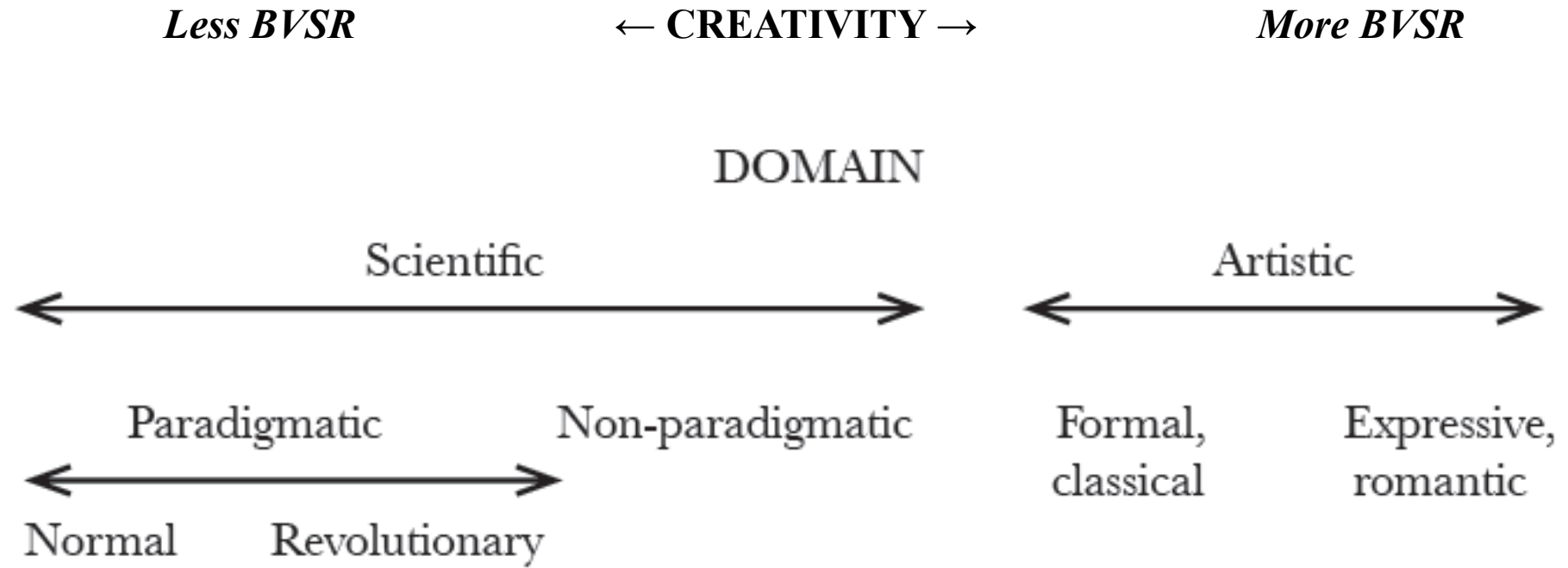


Clark L. Hull^{1,3,4,6,8}

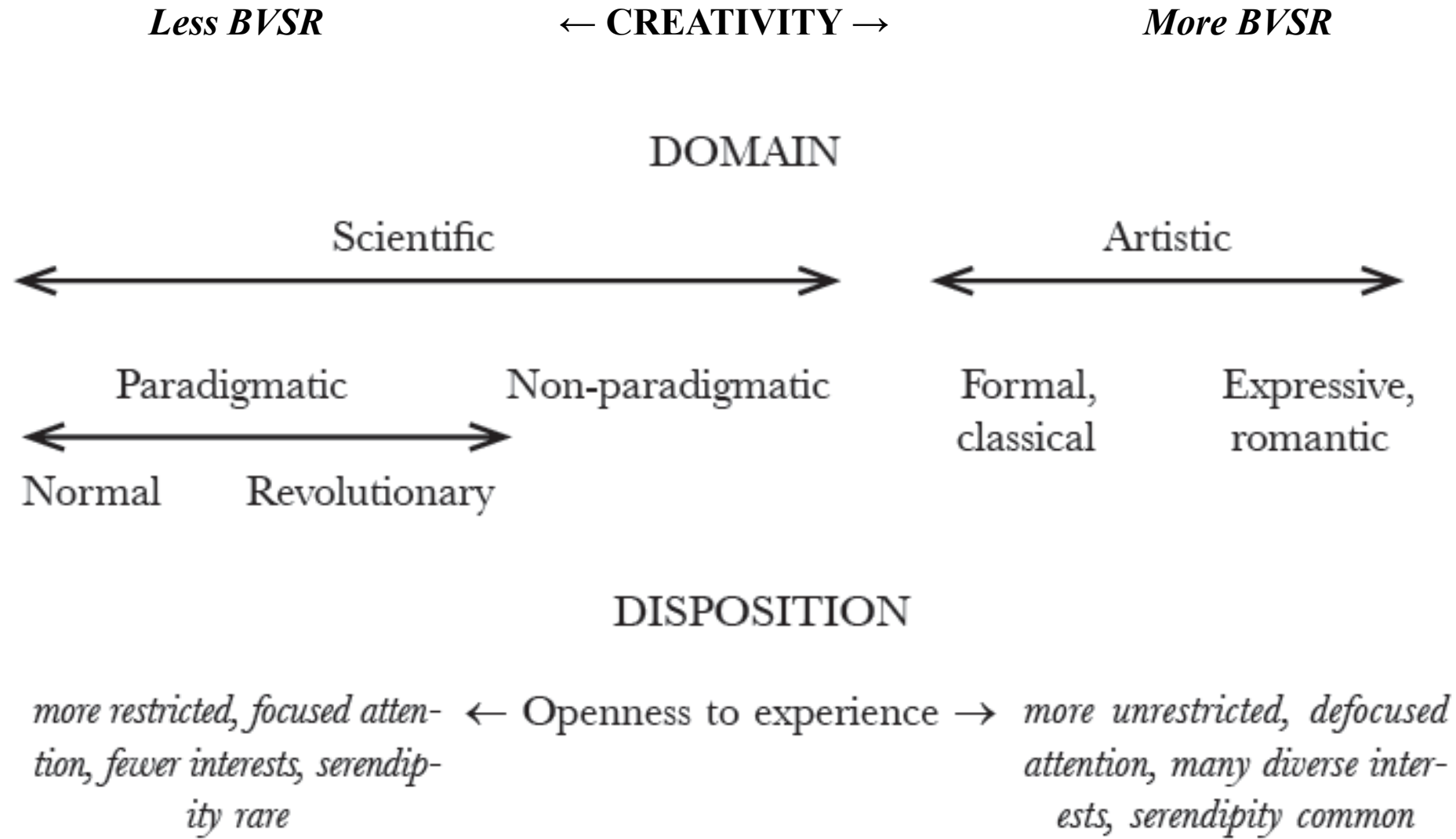
1936
YALE

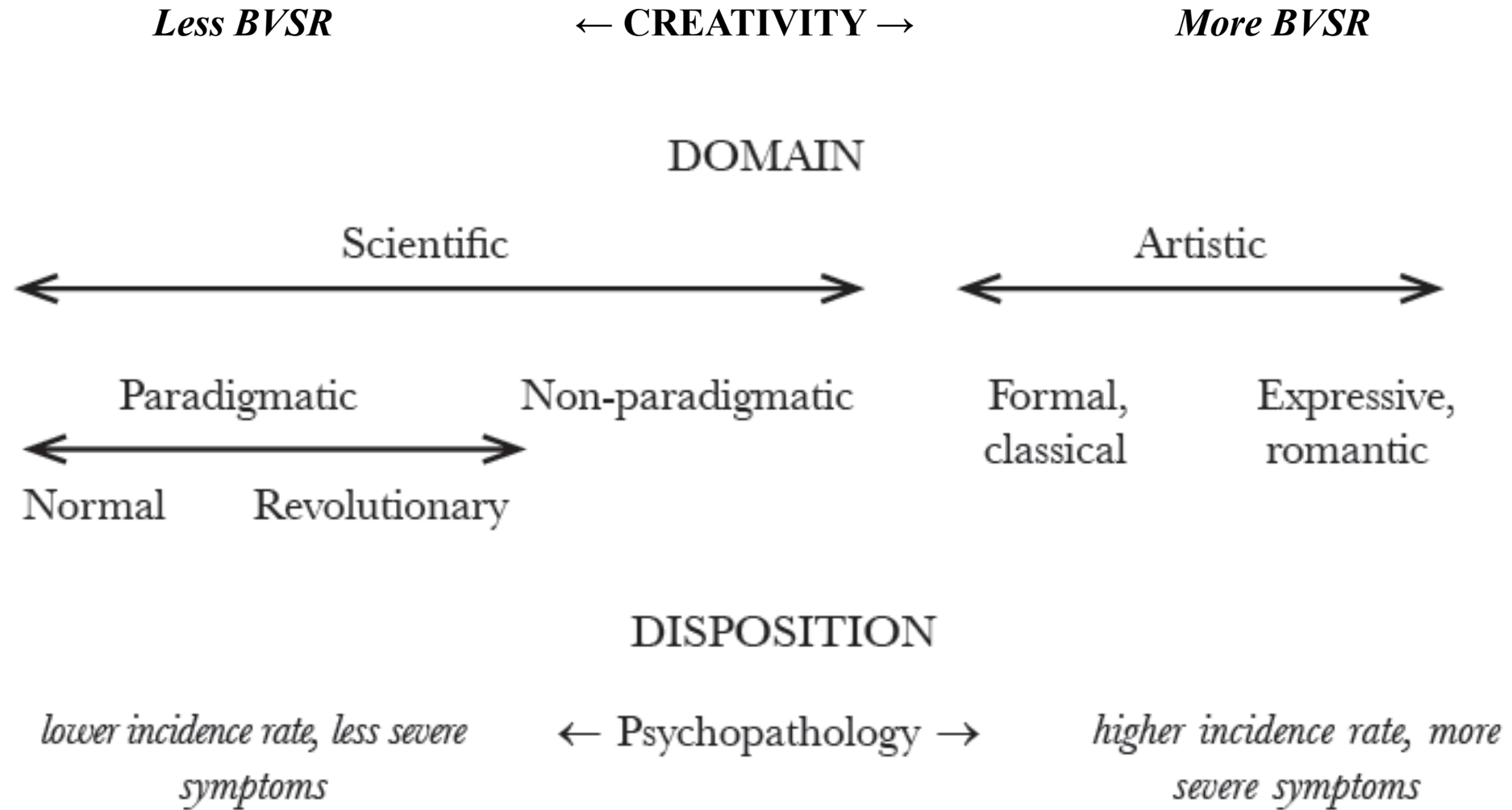
Carl I. Hovland^{2,3,4,5,6,8}

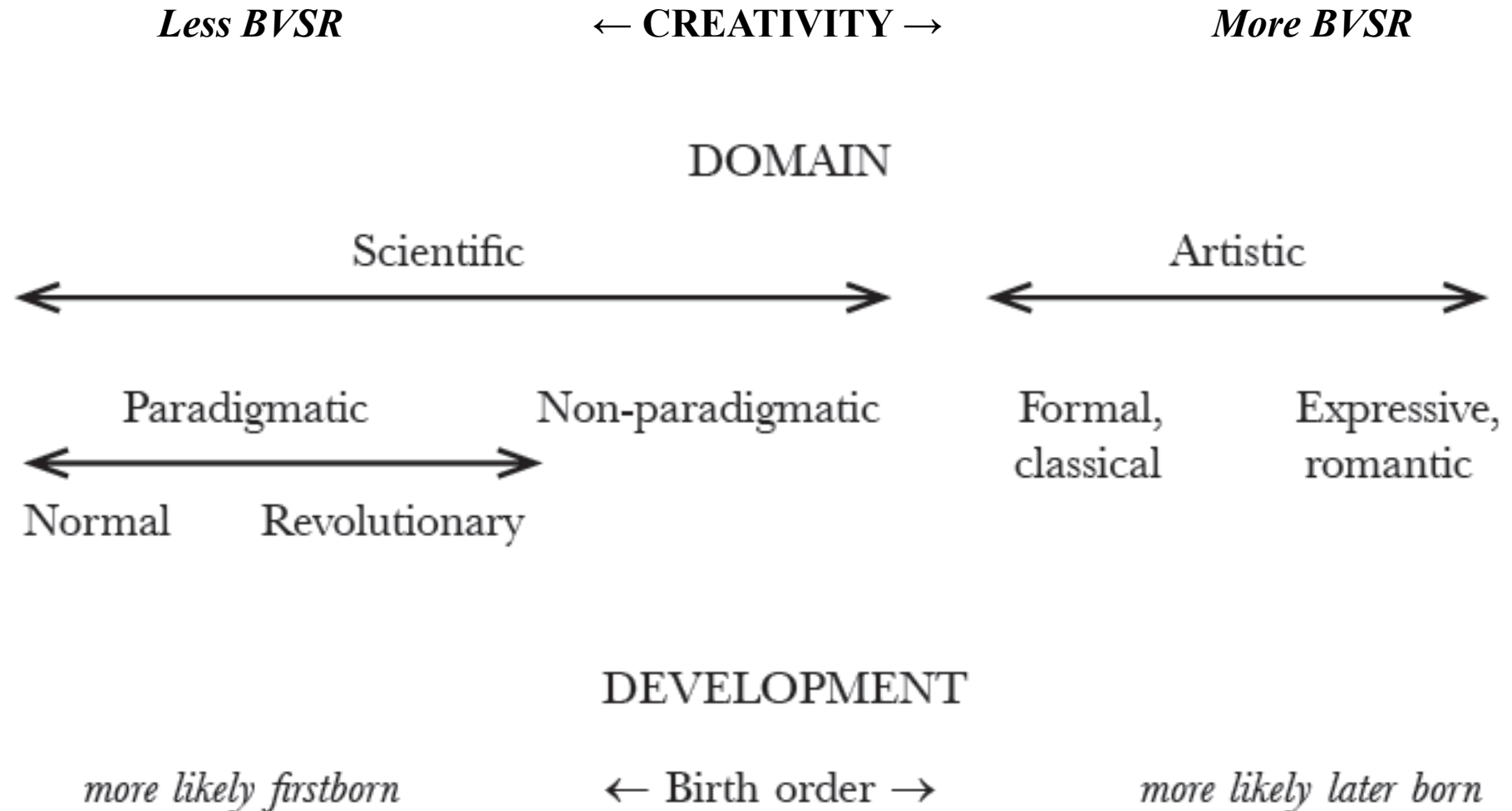
1941
YALE

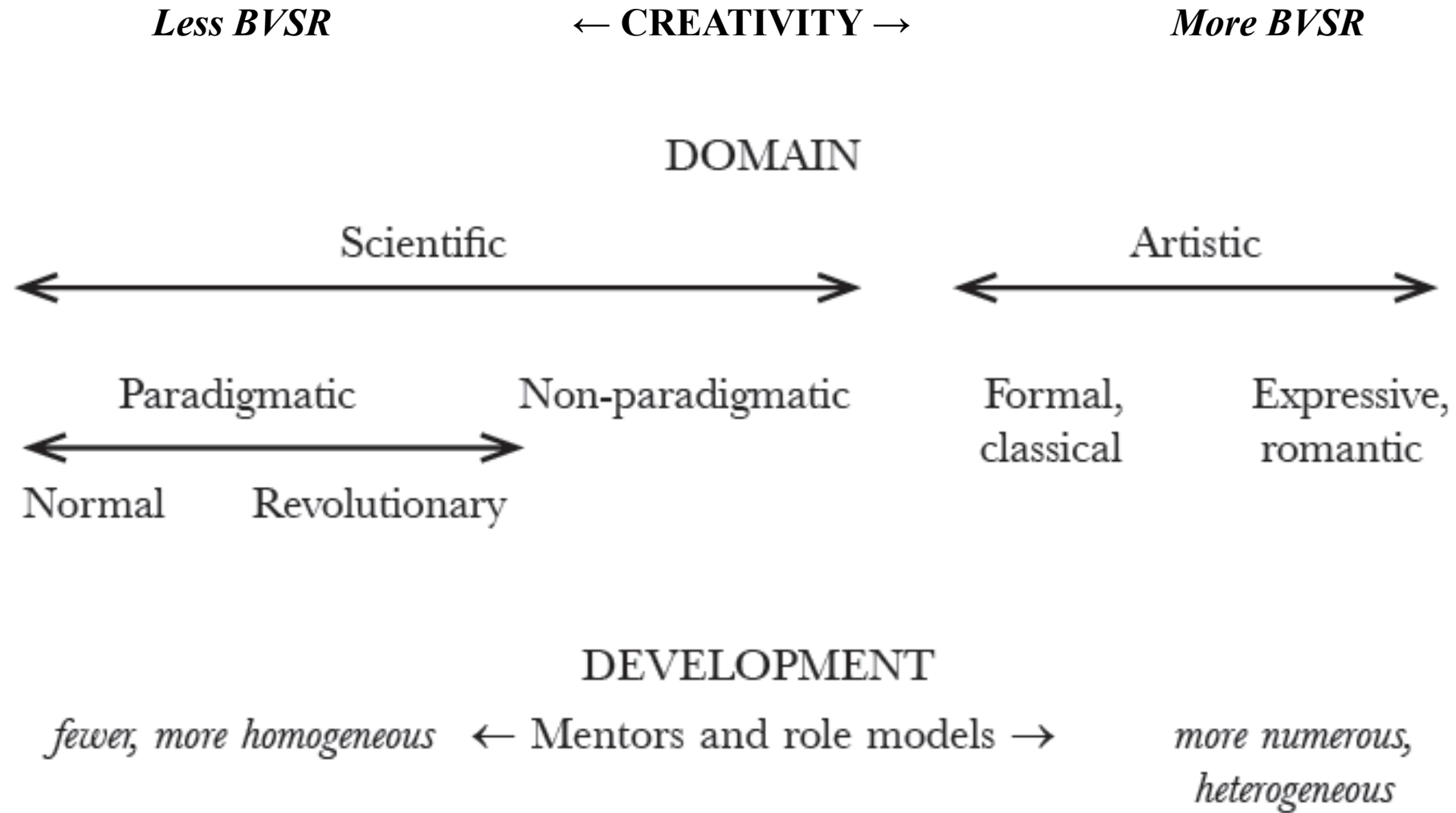


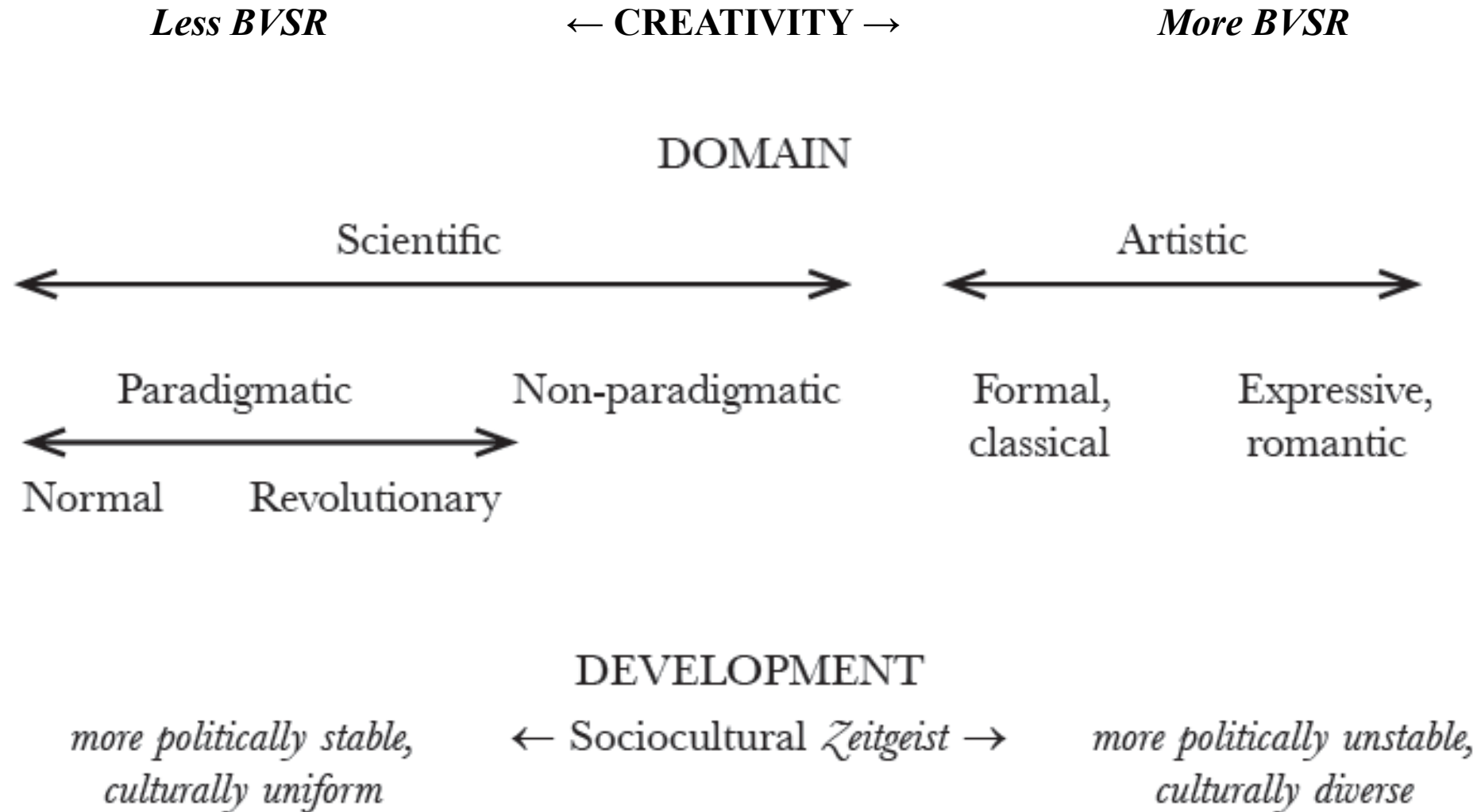
Critical Implications for DISPOSITION and DEVELOPMENT



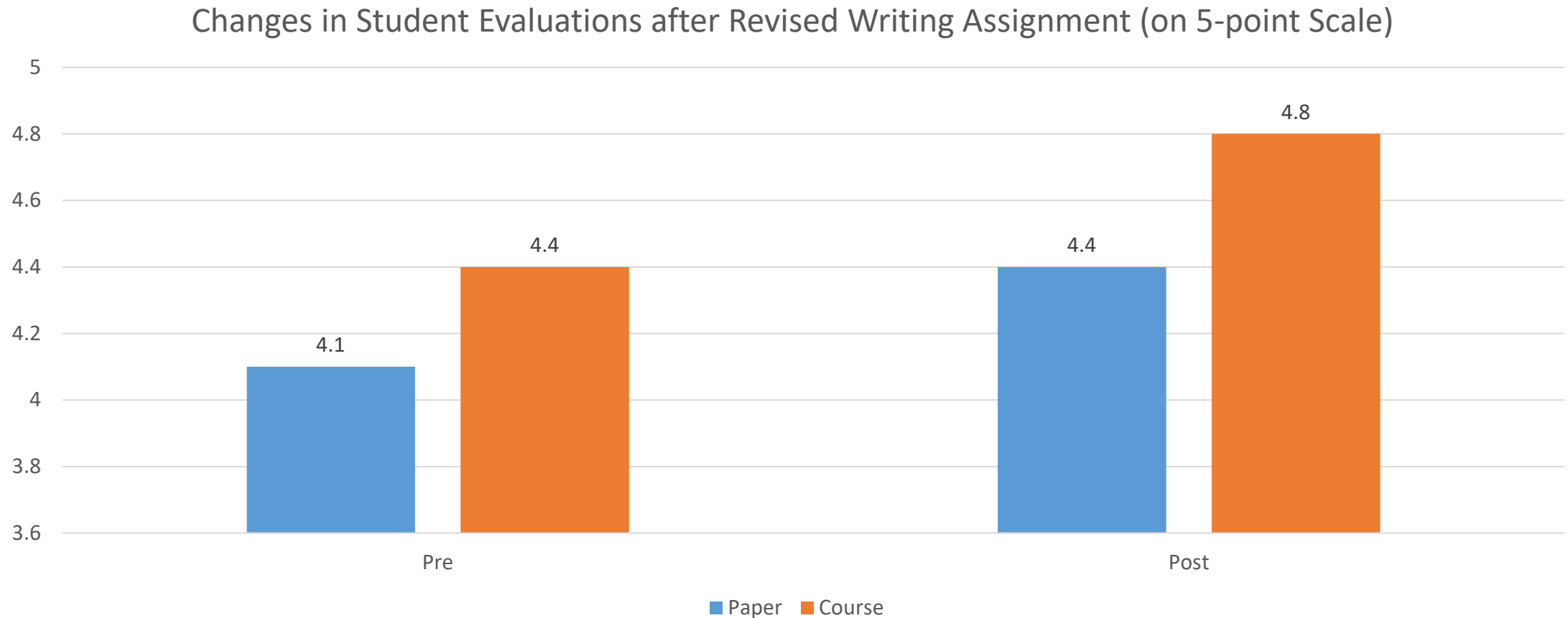








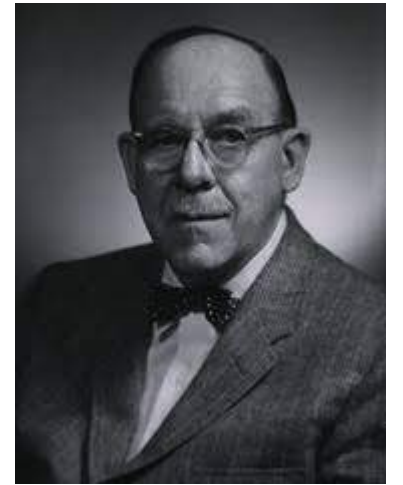
So, does the newfangled assignment render History of Psychology appreciably less *boring*?



Quotation from 2006 Robert S. Daniel Award Citation (Society for the Teaching of Psychology, APA Division 2)

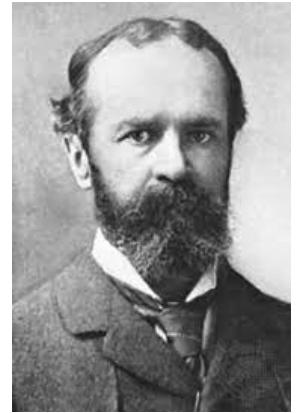
In the classroom, Dr. Simonton is known for his creative and innovative assignments. For example, in his term paper assignment for History of Psychology, he demands more of his students than a simple summary of the contributions of important figures. Instead, he requires students to analyze a figure from the standpoint of what psychologists now know about scientific genius. That is, to what extent does the figure fit the typical profile in terms of cognitive, ^{developmental} personality, and social variables? As a result, students have[^] to analyze the figure by integrating knowledge from the field. This innovative approach has been published in *Teaching in Psychology*.

Evaluation



- What would E.G. Boring think?
 - Personalistic rather than naturalistic? No, not at all!
 - First, the “great person” focus is purely *naturalistic* rather than old-style “celebratory” “hero worship” (viz. the metasciences, especially the psychology of science)
 - Indeed, the metasciences have empirically demonstrated the elitist stratification of scientists, a small proportion dominating overall output (e.g., Lotka and Price Laws)
 - Further historiographic discussion in
 - Ball, L. (2012). Genius without the “great man”: New possibilities for the historian of psychology. *History of Psychology*, 15, 72-83. or
 - Ball, L. (2014). The genius in history: Historiographic explorations. In D. K. Simonton (Ed.), *The Wiley handbook of genius* (pp. 3-19). Oxford, UK: Wiley.
 - Second, the term paper accounts for only 40% of the student’s grade, while the mid-term and final take a decidedly *history of ideas* approach (e.g., tracing the evolution of some central debate from the ancient Greeks to the present century)
 - Yet because the term paper requires each student to become totally immersed in a book-length biography of an eminent psychologist, students acquire both depth and breadth
 - P.S.: They’re warned Wikipedia won’t cut it, nor will cut and paste work

Evaluation



- What would William James think?
 - Well, assuming that most students major in psychology because they love the subject matter, they will be “already spontaneously engaged” and they will themselves discover “paths of connection from that material to the matters to be newly learned” with a little help from their instructor
 - Furthermore, that engagement is intensified given that the subject of their paper is chosen by the student (viz. their “favorite famous psychologist”)
 - Besides, James himself was fascinated with the problem of how individuals can shape history from a strictly naturalistic (Darwinian) perspective
 - James, W. (1880, October). Great men, great thoughts, and the environment. *Atlantic Monthly*, 46, 441-459. For update based on the most current scientific research, see
 - Simonton, D. K. (2018). Creative genius as causal agent in history: William James’s 1880 theory revisited and revitalized. *Review of General Psychology*, 22, 406-420.



Conclusion

- The Society for the History of Psychology By-Laws
 - Article I - Name and Purpose
 - 2. The purpose of this organization shall be
 - (a) to encourage and facilitate original scholarship in the history of psychology; and
 - (b) to extend the awareness and appreciation of the history of psychology as an aid to the understanding of
 - (1) contemporary psychology in its aims as a science, profession and means of promoting human welfare,
 - (2) its relation to other scientific and scholarly fields, and
 - (3) its role in society.



Conclusion

- The Society for the History of Psychology By-Laws
 - Article I - Name and Purpose
 - 2. **The purpose** of this organization **shall be**
 - (a) to encourage and facilitate original scholarship in the history of psychology; and
 - (b) **to extend the awareness and appreciation of the history of psychology as an aid to the understanding of**
 - (1) **contemporary psychology in its aims as a science**, profession and means of promoting human welfare,
 - (2) **its relation to other scientific and scholarly fields**, and
 - (3) its role in society.



Conclusion

- The Purpose of this SHP Presidential Address was
 - “to extend the awareness and appreciation of the history of psychology as an aid to the understanding of
 - (1) contemporary psychology in its aims as a science ... [and]
 - (2) its relation to other scientific and scholarly fields ...”



Conclusion

- More specifically, to integrate more closely the history of psychology with the psychology of science to the mutual benefit of both subdisciplines –
 - using the undergraduate history of psychology course as the example
 - and yielding the result ...
- 