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Preface

The merits of reading are many. It promotes literacy which also includes writing ability. Such benefits are equally extended to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. Among different types of reading, extensive reading (ER) has been closely examined in EFL classrooms in Taiwan. It has been found that ER promotes reading comprehension, reading speed, vocabulary learning and retention, and above all, raising test scores of high-stake exams such as TOEIC and GEPT. Similarly, the research reported in this book explores the benefits of reading. Yet, unlike earlier studies, this research involves empirical studies on two modified ER programs reading abridged and simplified literary fictions to investigate Taiwan's young adults' perception of MI, intercultural sensitivity and global awareness after having participated in these programs. One program was infused with regular reading activities that relied heavily on verbal and logical intelligences, while the other was infused with Multiple Intelligences activities which included other types of intelligences such as natural, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, visual-spatial, and existence intelligences. In short, the book discusses the relationship among ER, MI, and intercultural and global awareness.

Chapter one of the book introduces the background of the research on ER, MI and the importance of developing non-cognitive skills such as inter-cultural sensitivity and empathy through reading literary fictions. Chapter two provides an overview of relevant literature on ER, MI, reading activities, reciprocity of reading and writing, pluralism in multiculturalism, gender and reading, and finally computer technology and reading. Chapter three presents the rationales and details for the design of the two reading programs

adopted in the studies. The methodology for investigating the efficacy of this design will be explained as well. Chapter four introduces the results of the two studies, starting from those of the pilot, followed by the findings of the main study.

Chapter five in turn discusses these findings that could help answer the research questions set out in the beginning of the book, which are namely issues of motivation in reading, development of MI, improvement in writing skill, enhancement of inter-cultural sensitivity and global awareness, and finally whether gender is an important confound in these findings. Even though the role of computer technology is not one of the research questions, but based on the findings of the studies, some limitations and implications of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) will also be discussed. Finally, chapter six, the conclusion, closes the book by providing some pedagogical suggestions to implementing reading programs in the tertiary environment in Taiwan and ideas for future research.