Seventh Edition

Both a serious academic text and an intriguing story, this seventh edition reflects a significant update in research, theory, and applications in all areas. It presents a comprehensive view of the historical development of learning theories from behaviorist through to cognitive models. The chapters also cover memory, motivation, social learning, machine learning, and artificial intelligence.

The author’s highly entertaining style clarifies concepts, emphasizes practical applications, and presents a thought-provoking, narrator-based commentary. The stage is given to Mrs. Gribbin and her swashbuckling cat, who both lighten things up and supply much-needed detail. These two help to explore the importance of technology for simulating human cognitive processes and engage with current models of memory. They investigate developments in, and applications of, brain-based research and plunge into models in motivation theory, to name but a few of the adventures they embark upon in this textbook.

Guy R. Lefrançois is Honorary Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, Canada. He has published over 50 titles, including a number of best-selling textbooks in their respective fields.
Theories of Human Learning

Mrs. Gribbin’s Cat

Seventh Edition

GUY R. LEFRANÇOIS

University of Alberta
This book is dedicated to my grandmother, Emerilda Francœur, who taught me things I would never otherwise have known, with an honorable mention to Mrs. Gribbin’s feline, Schrödinger.

( Editor’s Note: This is Mrs. Gribbin’s motto, thumbprint, seal, and signature – all of which she insisted are necessary to make a document true and binding. In English, this Latin motto – fronti nulla fides – means, more or less, “you can’t judge a book by its cover.” )
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PREFACE: READ THIS FIRST...

... not just because it’s at the beginning of the book but because if you don’t, you might wonder what the devil is going on.

Let me get right to the point: I didn’t write this book. Truth is, the first edition was a report written and given to me by Kongor, a behavioral scientist from – well, it doesn’t really matter in any case. That report, published in 1972, was titled *Psychological Theories and Human Learning: Kongor’s Report*.

A decade later, readers began to complain that some of what Kongor had written was imprecise, irrelevant, inaccurate, or insulting. So, I was forced to prepare a second edition by myself. It was published in 1982.

Then, almost two decades after Kongor’s visit, somebody named Kro crawled out of the muddy slough in front of my bush cabin, claiming he was here to update Kongor’s original report, which he did. That was the third edition: *Psychological Theories and Human Learning: Kro’s Report*, published in 1995.

A few years later, an Old Man barged uninvited into my living room, insisting he had updated, corrected, polished, and absolutely perfected all previous editions. That was the fourth edition: *Theories of Human Learning: What the Old Man Said*.

Only five years after that, late one Thursday afternoon, a disheveled Old Woman rode up to me on a unicycle. “Things change. Science doesn’t stand still,” she muttered, “so I’m gonna give you the next edition.” That was *Theories of Human Learning: What the Old Woman Said*.

I thought that would be it. But no. In the middle of one of those sleepless nights when I worried they might be closing in, I received this message sent to my anonymous email address: “Outstanding new edition is ready,” it said. “Come get it at the Palladium. Come alone. DO NOT BRING YOUR FRIENDS! (You know who!).” I went, met some guy who said he was a Professor, and ended up with the sixth edition (Theories of Human Learning: What the Professor Said) ... and more trouble I didn’t need.

No matter where I hide, they find me. A few weeks ago, my phone rang in the middle of the night. Startled out of a weird dream about small donkeys, I staggered out of bed and fumbled around in the darkness, but by the time I found the phone, it had stopped ringing.

In the morning, I saw that a voicemail message had been left. That’s where this all starts.

The voicemail, which I have kept because publishers (and readers) are often skeptical, barked in what sounded like a disgruntled woman’s voice: “That learning book is completely out of date and lots of it is dead wrong and misleading so if you want to fix it, and you’re still on the loose, be at Willy’s Social House next Monday after dark.” That’s all it said, except for the very end which is where the voice laughs, sort of a cackling, croaking sound, and says that
maybe I should wear a disguise even when it’s dark. I don’t need one any more, with the facial hair and everything.

It was a damp, gloomy night, that Monday, and when I didn’t immediately see anyone near Willy’s, I thought I might have been lured here, finally trapped, and I turned to flee. But then an old lady rose from the shadows and when I asked was it her who had called and who was she, she hesitated for an awkward time and then said yes, she was nobody else than she who had called and that if I needed to name her, Mrs. Gribbin would be okay, but she didn’t sound convinced.

Mrs. Gribbin brought me this manuscript. I wrote only this preface, the epilogue, some footnotes, and a few little bits here and there (always in italics). The rest, organized into 12 chapters, is what she read from a really battered old manuscript, often throwing in her own explanations and examples. She insisted that I record her words as she read them and that I also make handwritten notes. “For future generations,” she said when I asked why.

I changed nothing of what she wrote; I am just a lowly clerk. When she spoke “off the record,” she insisted that the recorder be turned off. If what she said in those circumstances seemed important, I put what I could remember or what I could decipher from my handwritten notes into footnotes.

Old lady Gribbin wanted it made perfectly clear that although she spoke all these words as she told me this book, they were certainly not all her words and thoughts. She asked that I explain very carefully that this is a revision – an updating and a correcting of the first six editions. She grumbled that many of the words and examples in this seventh edition are left over from those primitive earlier editions and that she could have done better if she had time to start from scratch.

The few comments I have permitted myself in this seventh edition serve only to tell something of this old lady, Mrs. Gribbin – to describe where she was and what she was doing at this moment or that. Very rarely, I asked questions. Sometimes, she responded; mostly, she didn’t. When she did, I included what I remembered of her replies – but always only in footnotes.

**WHAT’S NEW IN THE SEVENTH EDITION?**

This seventh edition is a survey and interpretation of some of the important theories and findings in the psychology of learning. It includes a detailed examination of the main behavioristic and cognitive theories and an appraisal of each, together with a discussion of its most important practical applications, especially in education. Also, it looks at the most recent and useful models of memory, motivation, social/cognitive learning, and current brain-based research, and it explores recent and rapidly changing progress in the field of machine learning and artificial intelligence. Like its predecessors, this edition continues to emphasize relevance and practical implications of topics, clarity of presentation, and maintenance of high interest. The seventh edition reflects a significant updating of research, theory, and applications in all areas, including:

---

1 I still don’t know if Gribbin was her real name. That’s the only name she ever gave me. I mostly just thought of her as the Old Lady, but to her face I always called her Mrs. Gribbin.
Preface: Read this First...

- highlighting recent developments in, and applications of, brain-based research;
- describing newer models in motivation theory and their implications;
- summarizing current models of memory and related implications for theories of learning;
- exploring the importance of technology for simulating human cognitive processes and suggesting new models of learning;
- examining the effects of screen violence on children and adults; and
- looking at what machines capable of deep learning and artificially intelligent behaviors might mean for the future.

There is also a tidbit of information about Schrödinger, a unique cat.

The book is written primarily for students of human learning, teachers, counselors, social workers, industrial psychologists, nurses, social psychologists, quantum physicists, numismatists, physicians, lawyers, dentists, engineers, housewives, spelunkers, farmers, judges, philatelists, fishermen, tree planters, glass blowers, plasma physicists, vagabonds, poets, stockbrokers, philosophers, retired types, environmental activists, grandmothers, and all others – more or less in that order.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mrs. Gribbin wanted me to pass on her appreciation to about 500 different people, all of whom she said deserved emoluments, credits, applause, and many wet kisses. I said there’s no room, this isn’t an encyclopedia. She said okay, but you have to say thank you to the publisher (Cambridge University Press), the acquisition editor (David Repetto), the assistant editor (Emily Watton), the content managers (Rosie Crawley and Nicola Chapman) and copy editor (Gary Smith) ... your grandmother (Emerilda Francœur), the guy you borrowed the boat from, your office cleaning company – and then I said, whoa, that’s enough, are you trying to get all 500 in? And she said no, but please thank the anonymous reviewers because they were so amazingly competent and clever.

The old lady Gribbin also wanted me to indicate that she’s not responsible for any errors and misinterpretations that remain in this text. “If any errors creep in,” she said, “it’ll be the fault of reviewers, editors, and other publishing types.” That, of course, is absolutely untrue. The old lady, Mrs. Gribbin, is fully responsible for any weaknesses and flaws in the book.

Guy R. Lefrançois

P.S. Many thanks to Claire, who succeeded in photographing Kro, and to Claire and Liam, who came closer than anyone to getting recognizable photos of the Old Man and the Old Woman. I took the photo of the Professor myself with my hidden, motion-activated, infrared wildlife camera. The only photo we have of Mrs. Gribbin is a screen shot from a security camera she inadvertently activated the night she apparently got lost and broke into my neighbor’s kitchen (see page 455).