

# Assignment 1: sensory perceptions

[Experience](#)



Assignment 1: Sensory Perceptions Nicole Brock PHI 210 Renee Pistone  
10/21/2012 " The brain, a complex structure, allows a human being to perceive and react to their environment, contemplate " the big questions," and experience a myriad of emotions. The brain controls the body and maintains the delicate internal balance needed to sustain life" (Smith, 2010). If fortunate enough, we humans all have five senses: vision, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. All of these senses that we have, work together to give us a conscientious picture of the world and where we belong in it. The statement, " There is nothing in the mind unless it is first in the senses" (Kirby & Goodpaster, pg. 54), means, that our brain would be empty without our senses. Our senses consolidate to make us understand who we are, where we are, and what is happening around us. Because our brain feeds and processes information about our five senses, we put meaning to our sensory experiences, thus, we are able to respond and behave accordingly. We rely on accurate observations. Our senses prove its accuracy on a daily basis and " act as our lenses, amplifiers, particle detectors, and pressure and heat gauges" (Kirby & Goodpaster, pg. 54). Our vision allows us to be aware so we can stop at red lights, wait for cars to pass, and know when it is safe to walk across the street. Hearing is another powerful sense that we use to listen to words, is crucial in communication, and is interactive with our thinking. When we hear a very loud noise close to us, we become startled and our senses might kick in and tell us to be aware of our surroundings. The touch sensory is circulated throughout our body. When we feel heat on a pan on the stove, our senses alert us to the danger of being burnt, and we proceed with caution before receiving further injury. Smelling uses the noise that sends sensations to the brain. When we smell smoke, we instinctively

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know there is a fire or something is burning. Then our sense sends a message to our brain that we need to take care of the problem or leave if it is too dangerous. " Our senses feed our brain much as food feeds our body; without their input, our brain would be almost empty" (Kirby & Goodpaster, pg. 54). I believe that our senses, in most cases, are accurate. There are elements in life such as being sick or sleep deprived, that may distort the accuracy of our sensory perceptions temporarily, but in most cases they are accurate and the information they provide us with is essential in establishing our thinking. There are also other cases where what we think we see is not really what it is, " habits, interests, and biases, focuses and thus limits our perceptions" (Kirby & Goodpaster, 2007, pg. 56). I believe that our sensory information in most regards is accurate, without any sort of accuracy we would not depend on them as much as we do in our thinking and decision making. When it comes to the accuracy of sensory data, there are various things that can cause an affect. Clearly, the brain needs food. Just like the rest of your body, it requires energy, protein, and vitamins for the brain to function correctly. Without a proper diet, our brain will have an effect on the sensory data. Drugs and alcohol also play a huge part in contributing to sensory accuracy. Certain types of drugs such as nicotine, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines and ecstasy can affect the brain as well. " All of these drugs interact with the brain at the synapse, increasing or decreasing the brain's natural chemical activity. Even though their pharmaceutic effects are different, they all have in common the ability to disrupt our cognitive abilities; and in some cases the deficits seems to last after the drug is discontinued, leaving open the possibility of permanent cognitive damage" (Kirby & Goodpasters, pg. 72). Last but not least, sleep is inevitable. We

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need sleep to think. Perhaps that is why we spend one-third of our lives sleeping. " Sleep, like diet and exercise, is important for our minds and bodies to function normally. In fact, sleep appears to be required for survival. Rats deprived of sleep die within two to three weeks, a time frame similar to death due to starvation" (" Why Sleep Is, " 2008). Sleep is a natural part of everybody's life, but many people try to get by with a little amount of sleep. Sleep is something our bodies need to do, it is not an option. " Sleep debt can negatively affect mood, motivation, memory, decision making, concentration, problem solving, and logical thinking" (Coren, 1996; Kirby & Goodpasters, pg. 73). The nature-nurture controversy is defined as, " A traditional and long-standing disagreement over whether heredity or environment is more important in the development of living things, especially human beings. " The relative contribution of nature (genetic and biological inheritance) and nurture (environmental factors) in developmental processes have been, and to this day, continues to be a debate. Both nature and nurture influence behavior. Some things are obviously nature. Eye color, for example, is genetic, and cannot be influenced by environment, although people could use colored contacts to change their eye color. On the other hand, language is a matter of nurture, ultimately by where someone is born and raised. We may not see the world as it is, but that is where accuracy of sensory information is concluded. Three reasons to believe in the accuracy of sensory information are the ability to use our senses to provide data so that our brain can identify the truth, using our senses to help connect the brain and emotions together, and lastly, senses give the mind the potential to determine what reality is. References Smith, A. (2010, April 11). Functions of the Parts of the Brain. Retrieved from <http://www.livestrong.com>  
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