Student Feedback Report

Student Name: Pfour four
Overall Score: 20/20

Overall Summary

This essay excels across all criteria, demonstrating a clear thesis, logical organization, robust evidence, deep analysis, and polished writing, resulting in a comprehensive exploration of intuition's causes.

Detailed Criteria Breakdown

Thesis and Argument: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "the present paper argues that intuition is best explained as fast, unconscious pattern-matching rooted in accumulated personal experience."
• "Among these competing explanations, accumulated personal experience provides the strongest account."
Advice for Improvement: Continue to ensure the thesis directly addresses the prompt and maintains focus throughout; consider explicitly linking back to counterarguments in the body for even stronger argumentation.
Suggested Revision: Although several explanations have been offered, including evolutionary adaptation and general unconscious processing, this paper argues that intuition is best understood as rapid, unconscious pattern-matching derived from an individual's accumulated experiences, as supported by neuroscience and cognitive psychology.

Organization and Coherence: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "To examine this primary explanation in depth, the following sections explore how experience physically reshapes the brain through neuroplasticity, thereby facilitating the pattern-matching that lies at the heart of intuition."
• "As experiences accumulate, they create a rich knowledge base from which intuition draws."
Advice for Improvement: Maintain clear section headings and transitional phrases; to enhance flow, add brief summaries at the end of each section to preview the next.
Suggested Revision: Building on the neural foundations discussed, the accumulation of experiences further develops a comprehensive knowledge base, enabling intuition to draw upon tacit patterns for quick judgments.

Development and Support: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "As Richard Huganir, director of the Johns Hopkins Department of Neuroscience, explains, “When we learn something, even as simple as someone’s name, we form connections between neurons in the brain” (as cited in Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2025, “Memory Formation” section, para. 3)."

• "Heuristics are mental shortcuts that allow quick decisions without extensive deliberation (Orri, 2015)."
Advice for Improvement: Integrate more diverse sources if possible; ensure all citations are formatted consistently in APA style to strengthen credibility.
Suggested Revision: Heuristics, as mental shortcuts for rapid decision-making, enable quick judgments without deliberate analysis, as evidenced by Orri (2015), who describes their role in everyday cognitive processes.

Critical Analysis and Understanding: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "Through neuroplasticity, repeated experiences strengthen synaptic connections, create implicit long-term memories, and build tacit knowledge and heuristics that the brain accesses instantly in new situations."
• "Unlike evolutionary explanations, an experience-based perspective accounts for why some people consistently “just know” the right course of action: the richer and more relevant their history of experiences, the stronger and more accurate their intuition becomes."
Advice for Improvement: Deepen analysis by comparing your thesis more explicitly with alternative theories; incorporate potential limitations of the experience-based model for added nuance.
Suggested Revision: In contrast to evolutionary accounts that emphasize innate survival instincts, the experience-based model better explains individual variations in intuitive accuracy, as a more extensive and relevant experiential history yields stronger, more reliable neural pathways for pattern recognition.

Language, Style, and Mechanics: 4

Evidence from Essay:
• "Intuition is commonly described as immediate understanding or a “gut feeling” that occurs without conscious reasoning."
• "These rapid intuitive judgments arise from neural connections forged through repeated exposure."
Advice for Improvement: Vary sentence length even more for rhythmic engagement; proofread for minor formatting issues in references, such as consistent date formatting.
Suggested Revision: Intuition, often termed a 'gut feeling,' manifests as an immediate comprehension devoid of deliberate thought, drawing subtly from subconscious reservoirs of experience.

Appendix: Submitted Text

The Causes of Intuition: Fast Unconscious Reasoning

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Coquille High School
WR 121: Introduction to Academic Writing
Professor Cooper
December 5th, 2025

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Abstract
Intuition is commonly described as immediate understanding or a “gut feeling” that occurs without conscious reasoning. Although several explanations have been offered, including evolutionary adaptation and general unconscious processing, the present paper argues that intuition is best explained as fast, unconscious pattern-matching rooted in accumulated personal experience. Through neuroplasticity, repeated experiences strengthen synaptic connections, create implicit long-term memories, and build tacit knowledge and heuristics that the brain accesses instantly in new situations. Evidence from neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and decision-theory research supports the conclusion that individual differences in intuitive accuracy are largely attributable to the richness of one’s experiential knowledge base rather than to innate or purely evolutionary mechanisms.
Keywords: intuition, neuroplasticity, implicit memory, pattern-matching, heuristics

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The Causes of Intuition: Fast Unconscious Reasoning

In certain situations, people experience a strong sense of what to do when something feels right or wrong. This sensation is commonly known as intuition, an immediate understanding that arises without conscious reasoning. Several explanations for intuition exist. One attributes it to evolutionary adaptation, suggesting that humans retained intuition as a survival mechanism enabling rapid responses to threats (Elevate Medical, 2023). Another view holds that intuition stems from past experiences: the mind compares the current moment to previous ones and forms judgments accordingly (Psychology Today Staff, n.d.). Among these competing explanations, accumulated personal experience provides the strongest account. Repeated exposure shapes neural connections, forms memories, and creates long-term stored knowledge, all of which enable the instantaneous, non-conscious judgments characteristic of intuitive decision-making. To examine this primary explanation in depth, the following sections explore how experience physically reshapes the brain through neuroplasticity, thereby facilitating the pattern-matching that lies at the heart of intuition.

Experience and Neuroplasticity

Experience physically reshapes the brain, making intuition possible. Everything individuals encounter, hands-on practice, observation, and social interaction, alters neural architecture. As psychologists have noted, intuition relies on the brain's power of pattern-matching, rapidly scanning experiences stored in long-term memory for similar situations and delivering in-the-moment judgments (Psychology Today Staff, n.d., para. 9).

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Past experiences are encoded in the brain through neural processes that convert events into lasting patterns (Psychology Today Staff, n.d.). When people first meet someone, for example, the brain performs automatic, rapid evaluations by accessing stored information and generating immediate impressions. These connections, known as synapses, form the basis of learning. As Richard Huganir, director of the Johns Hopkins Department of Neuroscience, explains, "When we learn something, even as simple as someone's name, we form connections between neurons in the brain" (as cited in Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2025, "Memory Formation" section, para. 3). This process, neuroplasticity, strengthens or weakens synaptic connections depending on the frequency of exposure (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2025). The more often an event is encountered, the stronger the resulting neural pathways become. Such strengthening creates the foundation for intuitive responses that emerge without deliberate thought. Beyond

reshaping connections, repeated experiences also encode memories, particularly implicit ones, that operate below conscious awareness and directly fuel intuition.

Implicit Memories

Experience forms memories through the biological process of connecting neurons (Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2025). Memories vary in duration and accessibility: they may be short-term or long-term, explicit or implicit (Gasaway, 2016). Short-term memory temporarily holds information before it is either forgotten or transferred to long-term storage. Long-term memory includes declarative (explicit) memories that can be consciously recalled and implicit memories, such as habits, skills, or procedural knowledge like driving, that operate without conscious awareness (Hollands et al., 2016).

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Long-term memories, especially implicit ones, underpin intuition. Triggers such as familiarity, emotional significance, or repeated exposure can activate these memories unconsciously (Gasaway, 2016). For example, when individuals sense danger in a situation without understanding why, implicit memories may be responsible. The brain retrieves a prior similar experience and generates an immediate feeling of unease, even though the person cannot consciously recall the earlier event. As implicit memories accumulate over time, they form the foundation of tacit knowledge and cognitive shortcuts, or heuristics, that enable split-second decisions based on stored patterns.

Knowledge Base and Heuristics

As experiences accumulate, they create a rich knowledge base from which intuition draws. Some stored information can be recalled consciously, while other knowledge remains inaccessible to conscious articulation yet still influences behavior (Gasaway, 2016, para. 12). This inaccessible knowledge is often described as tacit. Driving offers a familiar example: skilled drivers react intuitively without consciously analyzing every action. Similarly, people frequently sense when something feels right or wrong based on intuitive knowledge derived from past observation of others' reactions (Fox, 2022).

These rapid intuitive judgments arise from neural connections forged through repeated exposure. The more frequently a situation is encountered, the stronger the associated pathways become, producing an immediate signal, known as a heuristic, when a similar circumstance arises again.

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Heuristics are mental shortcuts that allow quick decisions without extensive deliberation (Orri, 2015). Common examples include the availability heuristic (judging likelihood by how easily examples come to mind), the representativeness heuristic (judging by similarity to a prototype), and affect-based heuristics guided by emotion (Orri, 2022, Section 3.2). Tailored to specific contexts, these heuristics reside within the experiential knowledge base. Ultimately, the brain gathers vast amounts of information, constructs patterns from experience, and, when a new situation resembles stored knowledge, produces a judgment or sensation that individuals recognize as intuition.

Conclusion

Intuition can arise from multiple sources, yet accumulated personal experience emerges as the primary and most powerful cause. Through repeated exposure, individuals unconsciously shape neural pathways, form lasting implicit memories, and build the long-term knowledge that enables instantaneous, non-conscious decisions, the very essence of intuitive thinking. Unlike evolutionary explanations, an experience-based perspective accounts for why some people consistently “just know” the right course of action: the richer and more relevant their history of experiences, the stronger and more accurate their intuition becomes. A deep reservoir of personal experience thus provides the fast, unconscious reasoning people recognize as intuition.

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