

Cognitive Science Program

30
YEARS

COGNITIVE
SCIENCE
AT LEHIGH

Perception and Action in the Wild

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To paraphrase an old line, “What’s a nice cognitive scientist like you doing in a ___ like this?” In my case, the blank can be filled with robot factory, biopsy suite, or summer camp for the blind. If I had been asked that question as I found myself in any of those places (at the camp for the blind, in pitch-black surroundings), my answer would have been, pursuing cognitive science and its application. I look for the sweet spot that bridges interesting basic issues to human performance in settings where time and space are critical, and even small improvements matter. I will talk not only about examples of this approach, but also about general principles that guide my choice of problems and methods by which I attempt to enhance perceptually guided action.

Roberta Klatzky is the Charles J. Queenan Jr. Professor of Psychology at Carnegie Mellon University, where she is also on the faculty of the Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition and the Human-Computer Interaction Institute. Her research investigates perception, spatial thinking and action from the perspective of multiple modalities, sensory and symbolic, in real and virtual environments. Klatzky's basic research has been applied to tele-manipulation, image-guided surgery, navigation aids for the blind, and neural rehabilitation. Klatzky is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Psychological Association, and the Association for Psychological Science, a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and a member of the Society of Experimental Psychologists (honorary). For her work on perception and action, she received an Alexander von Humboldt Research Award and the Kurt Koffka Medaille from Justus-Liebig-University of Giessen, Germany.

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