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Criminal Minds: Inductive and Deductive Criminal Profiling

For my paper, I am choosing to talk about inductive and deductive reasoning in one of my favorite television shows, Criminal Minds. Criminal Minds is a show about criminal profilers with the FBI. Doctor Spencer Reid, Agents Hotchner, Jason Gideon, Derek Morgan and Jennifer Jareau, along with computer analyst Penelope Garcia are the main protagonists in the show. In each episode they have to figure out who the killer is based on his victims, the way he kills, where he kills, etc.. This is where the inductive and deductive reasoning come in.

Inductive and deductive reasoning makes use of general knowledge and then narrows that knowledge down to a specific synopsis. Inductive reasoning always starts with a conclusion, for example in an episode of Criminal Minds they conclude that 80% of serial killers that attack women in college parking lots are typically white males between the ages of 20-35 who still live with their mothers and tend to drive Volkswagen bugs. Therefore, when they had a woman attacked in a college parking lot they used inductive reasoning to put the killer in the group of age 20-35 men that live with their mothers and drive bugs. (Turvey, 1998)

Deductive reasoning is completely based on fact. This is something that you know specific facts about for sure. In Criminal Minds they use deductive reasoning much more than they do inductive. When they are addressing the public and giving the criminal profile they have typically narrowed down the facts about their killer and his or her M.O. They say things like the killer lives in this area, or this killers prey is this type of person, things that can be stated as fact because they have happened repeatedly, been narrowed down, or facts that the killer himself has given them.

Criminal Minds uses many different things that we’ve learned about so far in class, however I feel like inductive and deductive reasoning tends to be used the most. Their entire job is based of off having a conclusion, that there is a killer or a kidnapper, which is inductive, and giving the profile to the public to find this killer which is based on fact making it deductive reasoning. I’m glad that I have learned about this in class because I feel like I can now put together the profile with them instead of just watching the show.

Citations

Turvery, B. (1998). *Knowledge Solutions LLC 1997-2002/ Deductive Criminal Profiling* [online]. Corpus-delicti.com. http://www.corpus-delicti.com/Profiling\_law.html. Oct. 17, 2017.