

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, October 30, 2017

Where: 250 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:15 pm

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Learning Psychology from Riddles: The Case of Stumpers

ABSTRACT:

Riddles can teach us psychology, insofar as often it is psychology that makes them "work". We study a particular class of riddles, which we call stumpers.

Here's one:

There are two Indians on a hilltop. The old one is the father of the young one, but the young one is not the son of the old one. How come?

If you did not immediately see the solution -- you were (or still are) stumped.

Some stumpers rely on familiar psychology, and others can uncover novel principles.

Using a set of several stumpers, we analyze what made each work, and prove the correctness of our account through a variety of different methods.

Consequently, we are even in a position to design new stumpers.