Initial Post:

Hello all,

In the article “First-Time Violent Juvenile Offenders: Probation, Placement, and Recidivism,” authors Joseph P. Ryan, Laura S. Abrams, and Hui Huang were writing about the recidivism rate for juvenile offenders who were placed in three different forms of incarceration. These were home detention, secure facilities, and also work camps. The authors made the point that home detention was the most effective approach to avoiding having to arrest a juvenile offender again. The evidence showed that when juveniles are around other juvenile offenders for an extended time in detention or work camps, it can make them into even worse criminals. The article was very formally written, using phrases like “empirical literature” and “multidimensional treatment foster care.” Based on what I read in Chapter 7 on “Audience” about how different language would be used to communicate ideas about the same topic to children or adults, for example, this article seemed to be written for an audience with a special knowledge of the topic.

If I were presenting this same information to a different audience, I think I would choose to write to the general public. I would avoid using specialized language, and instead use words like “jail” that people use every day when talking about crime and punishment. There was a lot of good information in this article, but my audience would not need to know the details of demographic information, for example. My goal would be to focus on the reasons why home detention is more effective for violent juvenile offenders because it keeps them from being sent back to jail. In addressing this audience, I would still use a formal tone. These changes would be necessary because a more general audience isn’t as familiar with the terms used in the original article.

Tom

Sample Response to Classmate:

Hi Mary,

I really liked what you wrote here about “First-Time Violent Juvenile Offenders: Probation, Placement, and Recidivism.” I also read the same article, and I have to say that your summary made me feel like I could understand the whole article just from reading what you wrote. I also agree that the audience would be experts in this field, maybe social workers or judges, rather than the general public. Like you, I didn’t really understand everything the authors wrote and had to read over some of the sentences a couple of times. This made it seem to me like it was intended for an audience with more knowledge about the field. You were thinking about presenting this information to a law enforcement audience, so I wonder how different the language would need to be, if at all?

Tom