Student

Instructor

Assignment

Date

Discourse Community Investigation

1. *The Introduction*

The discourse community that I have selected is that of Criminal Justice (CJ), which ranges far beyond a major in school. The CJ discourse community (DC) embodies the police force, prison systems, and judiciary practices. This DC focuses on ethics, criminal theories, and an overall goal of improving society by reducing or eliminating crime. These goals may be seen as controversial outside the CJ community because some individuals outside of the community believe that corruption from within is designed to beget more crime. For the purpose of this assignment, I am strictly staying inside of the DC, and working under the belief that the primary goal of the CJ community is to provide a safer society by controlling crime.

When considering what role I would like to play in the CJ community, I knew that I had many choices. While a high ambition for me would be to become a detective, I believe that a more realistic aspiration would be to become a juvenile probation officer (JPO). A JPO’s work mostly involves supervising young people who have been accused of a crime and who now have special limitations to their conduct. As a JPO, I would be able to work with young people’s families, schools, and other social services to help the individuals get on the path to becoming successful sons or daughters, students, and eventually adults who do not reappear in the judicial system. I was extremely fortunate to grow up in stable household and to be provided with opportunities that kept me out of trouble; I know everyone is not that lucky. It is important to me to become a JPO because I want to help young people find better opportunities than what they may see in front of them.

Most DCs probably share certain types of communications, like online forums. The CJ community, however, uses some forms of communication that are entirely unique. For example, court cases and police reports are extremely important in the CJ DC. In the CJ community, individuals must be able to read and understand those documents in order to proceed effectively. Without understanding certain documents, officers and lawyers could have miscommunication that could damage the validity of a case. Academic journals are also a popular method of communication in the CJ DC, especially when examining criminal theories. These journals typically use concise language, which emphasizes the way in which the CJ DC aspires to work.

1. *The Discourse Dictionary*

**Adjudication**: This is the process in which a case is reviewed by a judge, which is then followed by the verdict and sentencing. When acting in the CJ DC, you must be able to understand adjudication and know what to do following the sentencing by the judge. As a JPO, I would need to be able to help my clients strictly follow the limitations given to them by the court system.

**Culpability**: Used in understanding a juvenile’s part in crimes, culpability is technically the guilt or blameworthiness within the adolescent. As a JPO in the CJ DC, I must recognize that a juvenile’s brain is not completely developed and he or she may not understand decision-making processes just yet. These limitations on an individual’s judgment and impulse control can weaken his or her culpability, thereby possibly reducing his or her sentencing.

**Delinquent**: As an adjective, “delinquent” describes misconduct and the tendency to commit typically nonviolent crimes. “Delinquent” can also be used as a noun to describe a young individual who commits offences. In my aspirational career, I would most likely work directly with individuals classified as delinquents. My goal is to help them move out of the role of delinquent and into a role deemed appropriate by society.

**Felony**: Felonies are crimes most likely involving violence, more serious than misdemeanors; these crimes usually call for sentences of a minimum of a year in prison. Certain offenses classified as felonies include murder and burglary. If a juvenile, person under the age of 18, commits a serious felony, he or she may be brought to trial as an adult. If the juvenile is convicted of a felony, they would likely face jail time with chance of probation. I must be aware of the distinction of crime types if I want to be in the CJ DC, and understand the terms and limitations of each.

**Juvenile Detention Center** (JDC): Also known as “juvie,” a JDC is a location that serves as a secure jail for juveniles who have committed crimes and considered a threat to society. In these facilities, the State is responsible for continuing a juvenile’s education. Juveniles who eventually leave a JDC are then placed under the supervision of a JPO, which is my aspirational career. I need to be familiar with the workings of JDCs in order to be able to reach out to and better understand the individuals who may be under my supervision.

**Juvenile Probation Officer** (JPO): A JPO is an individual who works within the limitations of the state, county, or district depending on the juvenile’s crime and needs; these officers will typically work with other social services, family members, and schools in order to supervise the juvenile. JPOs often also work as probation officers for adults. My aspirational career is to work as a JPO to facilitate young offenders to becoming productive members of society.

**Misdemeanor**: A misdemeanor is an infraction of the law that is seen to be less serious than a felony, but is technically deemed more critical than a petty offense. These are typically sentenced with monetary fines. Oftentimes, juveniles accumulate series of misdemeanors, which may call for a JPO to be assigned to supervise them and their actions. In my aspirational career, I would likely see this term frequently.

**Zero Tolerance Policy**: In the juvenile court system, zero tolerance policies are put into place in the juvenile court schools. These involve a strict set of rules that, when disobeyed, will ultimately result in a return to a JDC. I have come to understand that zero tolerance policies result in more young people being pushed out of their court mandated schools and into the prison system, especially as they get older and can more likely be tried as adults. In my career, I would try to get my clients to understand the policies in order to keep their behavior in check in order to keep them out of the prisons and detention centers.