



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

In the Matter of Scott Genereux,
et al., Correction Lieutenant
(PS9465I), Department of Corrections

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
OF THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

CSC Docket No. 2012-3136

Examination Appeal

ISSUED: JUL 16 2015 (JH)

Scott Genereux, Robert Karpew, Joseph Reardon and James Russo appeal the promotional examination for Correction Lieutenant (PS9465I), Department of Corrections. These appeals have been consolidated due to common issues presented by the appellants.

The subject examination was administered on May 7, 2015 and consisted of 70 multiple choice questions.

Mr. Genereux presents that he was only provided with 30 minutes for review and his ability to take notes on exam items was severely curtailed.

Regarding review, it is noted that the time allotted for candidates to review is a percentage of the time allotted to take the examination. The review procedure is not designed to allow candidates to retake the examination, but rather to allow candidates to recognize flawed questions. First, it is presumed that most of the questions are not flawed and would not require more than a cursory reading. Second, the review procedure is not designed to facilitate perfection of a candidate's test score, but rather to facilitate perfection of the scoring key. To that end, knowledge of what choice a particular appellant made is not required to properly evaluate the correctness of the official scoring key. Appeals of questions for which the appellant selected the correct answer are not improvident if the question or keyed answer is flawed.

With respect to misidentified items, to the extent that it is possible to identify the items in question, they are reviewed. It is noted that it is the responsibility of the appellant to accurately describe appealed items.

In addressing challenges to the scoring key, only arguments and contentions as they relate to disputed issues will be reviewed herein. An independent review of the issues presented under appeal has resulted in the following findings:

For questions 16 through 25, candidates were presented with a reading passage and required to determine the best method of expression in the underlined portion of a sentence taking into account grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling, and clarity.

For question 23, candidates were referred to the portion of the reading passage which provided, "It may be particularly helpful to exercise outdoors. Hiking, biking, and a brisk walk are a few examples of activities that will help clear your mind and allow you to be free from distractions." The keyed response is option b, "Hiking, biking, and taking a brisk walk." Mr. Reardon argues that option a, "Hiking, biking, and a brisk walk," is equally correct. He refers to Bridget P. Gladwin and Charles R. McConnell, *The Effective Corrections Manager* (3d ed. 2014) and presents that "[h]av[ing] or not having the word [']taking['] has no grammatical effect on the sentence . . . The word 'taking' in the correct answer seems to be an unnecessary 'zero word'." It is important to remain consistent, or parallel, in the wording of a sentence. Option a mixes gerunds (hiking and biking) with a noun (a brisk walk). Option b maintains a pattern (hiking, biking, taking) and does not mix forms. As such, the question is correct as keyed.

Questions 26 through 40 refer to Bridget P. Gladwin and Charles R. McConnell, *The Effective Corrections Manager* (3d ed. 2014).

Question 27 indicates that an issue came up which caused a delay in the mailroom and the incoming mail received by the facility was in danger of not being delivered to the inmates within the required timeframe. Although you handled the issue and ensured that the mail was delivered on schedule, the same issue appeared three days later. The question asks, according to Gladwin and McConnell, what this most likely indicates. The keyed response is option c, "The issue you dealt with was only the symptom of a bigger problem and not the problem itself." Messrs. Reardon and Russo argue that option d, "You did not spend enough time researching how to best deal with the issue," is the best response. In this regard, Mr. Reardon maintains that the text "states on multiple time [sic] throughout the book that research and gathering information [are] key factor[s] when implementing or improving methods . . . Proper research would have given the correct way to solve the problem." Mr. Russo presents that "the burden would be on the supervisor to have discovered this while attempting to solve the problem. In

essence, the supervisor failed to research and see the bigger problem.” The amount of time invested in research does not necessarily correlate to success. Furthermore, Gladwin and McConnell provide, “Also be mindful of whether the issue being confronted really is the problem or if it simply is a symptom of the real problem, which is hidden . . . Effective treatment of a symptom may lead to immediate improvement. However, the symptom may soon reappear, suggesting that what seemed to be the problem may not be the problem at all . . . It is not always clear if a symptom is only a symptom until it has been dealt with once and it returns.” Thus, the reappearance of the issue does not mean that you did not handle it. Rather, you may have solved a symptom of an underlying problem. Accordingly, the question is correct as keyed.

Question 29 indicates that you have pulled together a small team of custody staff to work on a special project. The team is progressing through the stages of team building described by Gladwin and McConnell. Currently, cooperation among team members is building and a team identity is beginning to emerge. Feelings of mutual respect are high while feelings of distrust are low. Communication is also becoming more open between group members. The question asks for the stage your team is currently in. The keyed response is option c, “Role definition.” Messrs. Genereux and Karpew maintain that option b, “Maturity,” is equally correct. They contend that the text indicates that the mature team exhibits high levels of cooperation, mutual trust, support and productivity. Gladwin and McConnell indicate that “team building occurs over the following separately identifiable stages: Formation[;] Disequilibrium[;] Role definition[;] Maturity[;] and Maintenance.” Under the heading, “Role Definition,” Gladwin and McConnell state, “As mutual trust and respect build among the group members, and as individual roles are clarified, then the interrelationships of these roles are established. Cooperation begins to build and a team identity begins to emerge. Distrust is rare, and mutual respect is high. Communication becomes more open as participants begin to behave less like competitors and find a level of comfort with other members of the group.” Under the heading, “Maturity,” Gladwin and McConnell provide, “Maturity, of course, describes the stable, functioning team. The mature team will exhibit high levels of cooperation, mutual trust and support, and productivity.” The description provided in the question stem clearly reflects the “role definition” stage of team building. The team is still developing and has not yet reached the “maturity” stage. Accordingly, the question is correct as keyed.

Question 30 indicates that upper management in your facility recently came to a conclusion about how they want to cut down on its overtime costs. Rather than just tell your subordinates about the changes that will be implemented to decrease overtime costs, you want to gain their acceptance of this solution to the problem. The question asks for the type of discussion meeting, described by Gladwin and McConnell, you should conduct with your subordinates. The keyed response is option b, “Directed discussion.” Mr. Karpew argues that “the correct answer is

Discussion Meetings.” He asserts that according to the text, “the objective of a discussion meeting is to gain agreement on something through the exchange of information, ideas, and opinions.” As noted previously, the question specifically asks for the *type* of discussion meeting that should be conducted. In this regard, Gladwin and McConnell, provide:

Directed Discussion

A directed discussion meeting may be appropriate when a conclusion, solution, or decision is evident. The conclusion has already been determined, yet it is not simply being relayed to the group as straight information. It is the leader’s objective to gain the participants’ acceptance of the solution. In effect, a directed discussion is a ‘sales pitch.’

As such, the question is correct as keyed.

Question 32 indicates that you are following the six-step decision making process and are currently in the stage of gathering information. The question asks for the general rule Gladwin and McConnell suggest you use when determining how much effort and time should be spent on information-gathering. The keyed response is option a, Information-gathering efforts should “be consistent with the potential impact of the decision to be made.” Mr. Karpew contends that “the best answer to this question should be how much information is available.”¹ In this regard, he argues that the text indicates that “the task is essentially to gather enough information to give some degree of assurance that the decision to be made is consistent with reasonable risks. The broad objective in gathering information is to gather everything that has a bearing on the decision-to-be. Gather everything that can reasonab[ly be] collected, considering the time and effort that can or should be devoted to reaching the decision.” It is noted that Mr. Karpew selected option d, Information-gathering efforts should “continue until you have gathered enough information to allow yourself to feel sure that you are making the right decision.” Gladwin and McConnell note that “nobody can say how much information is enough, and a manager must recognize that ‘enough’ information may never be available. It is only possible to suggest that to the extent possible, information-gathering efforts should be consistent with the potential impact of the decision to be made.” They further state, “it may not be possible to reach the stage where there is a 100 percent comfort level about taking a risk based on the information at hand . . . Somewhere along the way, the manager must take a stand, accept some risk, and decide.” Thus, option d is not the best response.

¹ It is noted that “how much information is available” is not an answer choice presented to candidates.

Question 33 indicates that you have several mature and reliable subordinates who are ready to assume additional responsibility in their jobs. The question asks, according to Gladwin and McConnell, how you should decide to which of these subordinates to delegate a task, when the need arises. The keyed response is option d, You should “choose the subordinate whose qualifications best match the requirements of the task to be delegated.” Mr. Karpew argues that option b, You should “select the subordinate who has been struggling the most recently, since this assignment will give him confidence and show that you have faith in him,” is the best response. He refers to Gladwin and McConnell, *supra*, and contends that you should delegate to the employee who is struggling “to show the employee that you have faith in them. Our job as managers is first to build our employees up, which in turn builds our department up. Not just delegate to a person who you know is qualified.” Gladwin and McConnell provide:

Pick the employee to delegate to by matching the qualifications of available employees with the requirements of the task to be delegated. How well this is done will depend to a great extent on how well the manager knows the employees' strengths, weaknesses, attitudes, and capabilities . . . However, it is not enough to simply make a subjective match between the requirements of the task and the perceived abilities of the person. The manager must consider who is most likely ready to assume additional responsibility. Also, it is important to concentrate on those employees sufficiently mature and reliable to give the assignment an honest try . . . While a modest amount of challenge is certainly desirable, too much challenge can be overwhelming to an employee. Over-delegation frequently leads to an employee's failure in a first attempt at handling increased responsibility, a harsh beginning that is not easily overcome.

Option b does not take into consideration whether the employee is suited to the task. In addition, option b indicates that the employee is struggling. Thus, it is not clear that the employee is ready to assume additional responsibility. As such, option b is not the best response.

CONCLUSION

A thorough review of the appellants' submissions and the test materials reveals that the appellants' examination scores are amply supported by the record, and the appellants have failed to meet their burdens of proof in this matter.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that these appeals be denied.

This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in a judicial forum.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
THE 15TH DAY OF JULY, 2015



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