Critical Thinking and Clinical Judgment: A Practical Approach
Fact Sheet

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Take all three for only $15 — a savings of $11!
1. This book is based on the belief that thinking is:
   a. innate, rather than learned.
   b. learned, rather than innate.
   c. similar to other skills (music, art, athletics).
   d. different from other skills (music, art, athletics).

2. Substituting problem solving for critical thinking can be a "sore subject" with some experts because:
   a. research shows that problem solving and critical thinking separate entities.
   b. they believe it’s important to use new terms to introduce new concepts.
   c. problem solving implies focusing on problems rather than outcomes.
   d. problem-solving is missing the concepts of creativity and improvement.

3. One reason we’re emphasizing the need to improve nurses’ critical thinking abilities is:
   a. critical thinking is mandated by the American Nurses Association standards.
   b. workplace studies show that nurses don’t think as well as other disciplines.
   c. new graduates are not demonstrating acceptable decision-making skills.
   d. nurses are expected to accept more responsibilities and make more independent decisions.

4. The main difference between thinking and critical thinking is:
   a. purpose and control.
   b. knowledge and skills.
   c. organization versus disorganization.
   d. acceptance versus criticism.

5. Which of the following best describes the relationship between critical thinking, clinical judgment, and clinical reasoning?
   a. The three terms are often used interchangeably.
   b. The three terms are quite different from one another.
   c. Critical thinking is separate from clinical reasoning and clinical judgment.
   d. Critical thinking is a high level of clinical reasoning and clinical judgment.

6. Which of the following best describes the relationship between critical thinking and outcome achievement?
   a. Critical thinking requires us to focus on achieving outcomes, rather than identifying problems.
   b. Critical thinking focuses more on outcomes and prevention, than problems and risks.
   c. Critical thinking requires us to clearly identify outcomes, problems, and risks.
   d. Critical thinking focuses on using critical pathways to streamline outcome achievement.

7. Critical thinking indicators (CTI™) are:
   a. clinical outcomes that demonstrate critical thinking.
   b. not reliable because there are many different thinking styles.
   c. behaviors that evidence suggests promote critical thinking.
   d. care maps that guide critical thinking for specific problems.

8. To get a picture of some things you can work on to improve your ability to think critically, you should:
   a. compare yourself with the list of Critical Thinking Indicators (CTI™).
   b. take courses that focus on critical thinking, rather than problem solving.
   c. examine how well you delegate, so that you have more time to think.
   d. ask for assignments that put you in completely new situations.

9. Principles of nursing process and scientific method that are evident in critical thinking include:
   a. determining interventions, using technology, and making decisions.
   b. observing, classifying data, drawing conclusions and testing hypotheses.
   c. setting priorities, applying policies, identifying top three problems.
   d. focusing on outcomes, applying research, and using care maps.

10. A key question to ask yourself to evaluate your potential to think critically is:
    a. How well have I done on IQ and other tests?
    b. How effective are my learning, reading, and communication skills?
    c. What has been my grade point average and class standing?
    d. Have I been evaluated for learning disabilities or attention deficits?
11. Three main steps to improving thinking include:
   a. taking a course in critical thinking, memorizing related knowledge, and practicing to improve.
   b. gaining insight, acquiring instruction and feedback, and practicing to improve.
   c. determining critical thinking indicators, measuring critical thinking ability, and getting certified.
   d. measuring IQ, identifying learning disabilities, and leaning better ways to memorize.

12. Developing awareness of how and why you think and learn the way you do is:
   a. not as important as gaining knowledge and experience.
   b. a key starting point for improving thinking.
   c. difficult to do without completing style instruments.
   d. the second step to learning how to improve thinking.

13. Which of the following are some human habits that may inhibit ability to think critically:
   a. face-saving, choosing-only-one, mine-is-better, self-focusing
   b. face-saving, ego preservation, memorizing before understanding, controlling
   c. making assumptions, mine-is-better, being judgmental, being indecisive
   d. nail-biting, foot-tapping, fingertapping, hair-twirling

14. To thinking critically, you should focus on the:
   a. outcomes more than on the problems and risks.
   b. problems and risks, more than on the outcomes.
   c. risks and outcomes more than on the problems.
   d. outcomes, problems, and risks involved.

15. Organizing and reorganizing information in different ways:
   a. hides relationships.
   b. inhibits critical thinking.
   c. helps you see patterns.
   d. helps you save time.

16. Critical thinking is:
   a. logical and doesn’t allow for intuition or trial and error.
   b. more intuitive than logical, and may require trial and error.
   c. intuitive and logical, but doesn’t allow for trial and error.
   d. logical and intuitive, and may require trial and error.

17. One way to improve your ability to think critically is to:
   a. organize and re-organize the CTIs™ to decide relationships among them.
   b. decide where you stand in relation to knowledge and intellectual skill CTIs™.
   c. memorize each of the CTIs™ so that you can recall them as needed.
   d. compare and contrast knowledge and intellectual skill CTIs™.

18. Becoming a critical thinker requires you to:
   a. take courses in conflict resolution and managing change.
   b. change innate tendencies and pre-dispositions.
   c. develop a critical thinking character and take responsibility.
   d. focus on strengths and to promote self-confidence.

19. When you learn by figuring things out in your own way, you:
   a. aren’t learning new ways.
   b. miss key perspectives.
   c. are thinking critically.
   d. miss opportunities to improve.

20. Clarifying personal values and organizational mission:
   a. requires conflict resolution.
   b. are listed as being CTIs™.
   c. helps novices more than experts.
   d. isn’t really that hard to do.
The purpose of chapter three is to encourage you to explore what critical thinking and clinical judgment in nursing entail, and to give you practical strategies for improving reasoning in the clinical setting. After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe what critical thinking and clinical judgment means to you in relation to the descriptions in this chapter.
- Address the implications of the major goals and outcomes of nursing.
- Explain what outcome-focused, data-driven, evidence-based care means.
- Compare and contrast the Diagnose and Treat (DT) and the Predict, Prevent, Manage, Promote (PPMP) approaches to health care delivery.
- Clarify your responsibilities related to diagnosis and management of medical and nursing problems.
- Explain the role of ethics codes and national and facility standards and guidelines in making decisions.
- Identify three things you will begin doing immediately to develop your clinical reasoning skills.

21. Critical thinking in nursing is:
   a. more than good problem solving.
   b. basically good problem solving.
   c. the same as decision-making.
   d. the same as analytical thinking.

22. Critical thinking in nursing must be:
   a. guided by most up to date critical paths.
   b. creative, logical, and step-by-step.
   c. out of the box, action-oriented, and precise.
   d. precise, disciplined, and in depth.

23. From professional and economic perspectives, nursing care should be driven by:
   a. the best available evidence.
   b. client satisfaction more than outcomes.
   c. clinical outcomes more than satisfaction.
   d. online standards and decision support.

24. The PPMP approach to health care delivery focuses on:
   a. evidence-based, problem-focused, and patient-centered care.
   b. treating all risks to prevent problems and ensure good outcomes.
   c. disease management, early intervention, and health promotion.
   d. disease management, setting priorities, and minimizing assumptions.

25. A key nursing responsibility related to diagnosis and management of medical and nursing problems is:
   a. developing a comprehensive plan for both medical and nursing problems.
   b. conducting research for most frequently encountered medical and nursing problems.
   c. monitoring for health status changes and detecting and controlling risks.
   d. ensuring that nurses and physicians collaborate on patient problems.

26. Ethics codes and national and facility standards and guidelines:
   a. should be considered separately from clinical reasoning.
   b. may sometimes conflict, impeding critical thinking.
   c. supercede all decisions and judgments made in nursing.
   d. act as guides to critical thinking and clinical judgment.

27. A good way to identify critical thinking behaviors you’d like to acquire or improve is:
   a. take a nationally-approved critical thinking instrument or test.
   b. compare yourself with the knowledge and intellectual skill CTIs™.
   c. study definitions of critical thinking found in nursing and other literature.
   d. reflect on related standards, policies, guidelines, and procedures.

28. Critical thinking and clinical judgment requires:
   a. using intuition, textbook knowledge, and creativity.
   b. synthesis of patient and computer data.
   c. specific knowledge, skills, and experience.
   d. synthesis of research and anecdotal data.

29. Consumers value having nurses who are:
   a. knowledgeable, confident, and intellectually skilled.
   b. caring and compassionate more than technically skilled.
   c. intuitive and creative rather than logical and unbending.
   d. technically skilled more than caring and compassionate.

30. Use of the nursing process is:
   a. not as helpful as using critical thinking.
   b. the foundation for clinical reasoning.
   c. mandated by the National League for Nurses.
   d. now being replaced by standard care plans.
31. If you’re faced with a situation in which you have two (or more) choices available, but neither (or none) of them seems satisfactory, this is an example of
   a. moral dilemma.
   b. moral uncertainty.
   c. moral distress.
   d. moral ambiguity.

32. The ethical principles of fidelity and veracity deal with:
   a. showing compassion and being honest.
   b. keeping promises and telling the truth.
   c. honoring patients and being loyal to the cause.
   d. respecting relationships and maintaining vision.

33. Nurses should clarify their values, beliefs, and ethical framework
   a. before they’re faced with ethical dilemmas.
   b. before taking advanced certification exams.
   c. when they’re faced with ethical dilemmas.
   d. during the senior year of nursing school.

34. The first step for moral and ethical reasoning is to identify the problem based on:
   a. the perspectives of key stakeholders.
   b. the perspectives of the patient.
   c. guidelines from the ethics committee.
   d. individual patient and nurse preferences.

35. If you’re a staff nurse, one of your major nursing responsibilities related to research and quality improvement is to:
   a. conduct studies to validate current nursing practices.
   b. differentiate between nursing research and quality improvement studies.
   c. teach patients about the risks of participating in clinical studies.
   d. think analytically about the situations you encounter.

36. When looking for articles to improve nursing care, you should check to be sure the journals are:
   a. designed for their intended audience.
   b. using only the most up-to-date references.
   c. refereed or peer-reviewed journals.
   d. available both in print and online.

37. Before you consider applying the results of a research study to practice you should:
   a. complete formal research approval forms with ethics committees.
   b. request that your Quality Improvement Department develop a policy.
   c. compare the results of the study with the results of other similar studies.
   d. have a nurse researcher run validity and reliability statistics on the study.

38. The first step to designing an individualized teaching plan is:
   a. comparing the person’s needs with standard teaching plans.
   b. identifying specific desired patient outcomes.
   c. determining individual learning style preferences.
   d. identifying an environment that’s conducive to learning.

39. Knowing how to memorize effectively is:
   a. key to promoting ability to think critically in nursing.
   b. more important than learning how to analyze data.
   c. no longer important since most data is on computers.
   d. unrelated to identifying links between concepts in nursing.

40. To improve your test scores, you should:
   a. review the content within a week of taking the test.
   b. learn strategies for making educated guesses.
   c. study the night before, rather than the morning of a test.
   d. avoid cramming because it actually causes "brain drain".
Course # 6101: Critical Thinking and Clinical Judgement
Chapters 1 through 4
5.0 contact hours

Answer Form
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Evaluation
1. Can you describe critical thinking and clinical judgment using your own words, based on the definitions in this chapter? yes ○ no ○ 
2. Can you give three reasons why critical thinking is essential for nurses? yes ○ no ○ 
3. Can you explain the relationship between outcomes (results) and critical thinking? yes ○ no ○ 
4. Can you clarify what the term Critical Thinking IndicatorTM (CTI™) means? yes ○ no ○ 
5. Can you describe five critical thinking characteristics you’d like to develop or improve? yes ○ no ○ 
6. Can you address how critical thinking is similar to and different from problem solving? yes ○ no ○ 
7. Can you identify four principles of the scientific method that are evident in critical thinking? yes ○ no ○ 
8. Can you explain three key steps to improving thinking? yes ○ no ○ 
9. Can you describe how your personality and learning style affects your ability to think critically? yes ○ no ○ 
10. Can you discuss how human habits influence critical thinking ability? yes ○ no ○ 
11. Can you address how asking the ten key questions listed on the inside front cover helps you decide your approach to critical thinking? yes ○ no ○ 
12. Can you describe five strategies that enhance critical thinking, giving reasons why the strategies work? yes ○ no ○ 
13. Can you identify the roles of logic, intuition, and trial and error in critical thinking? yes ○ no ○ 
14. Can you decide where you stand in relation to being able to demonstrate critical thinking indicators (CTIs™) for knowledge and intellectual skills? yes ○ no ○ 
15. Can you explain the relationship between your ability to think critically and developing character, knowledge, and skills? yes ○ no ○ 
16. Can you describe what critical thinking and clinical judgment means to you in relation to the descriptions in this chapter? yes ○ no ○ 
17. Can you address the implications of the major goals and outcomes of nursing? yes ○ no ○ 
19. Can you compare and contrast the Diagnose and Treat (DT) and the Predict, Prevent, Manage, Promote (PPMP) approaches to health care delivery? yes ○ no ○ 
20. Can you clarify your responsibilities related to diagnosis and management of medical and nursing problems?

Continued on back
21. Can you explain the role of ethics codes and national and facility standards and guidelines in making decisions?  
   yes ○   no ○

22. Can you identify three things you will begin doing immediately to develop your clinical reasoning skills?  
   yes ○   no ○

23. Can you give a description and an example of the terms moral uncertainty, moral dilemma, and moral distress?  
   yes ○   no ○

24. Can you make prudent decisions based on ethical principles, codes, and practice standards?  
   yes ○   no ○

25. Can you develop a personal code of conduct based on your personal values and content in this chapter?  
   yes ○   no ○

26. Can you describe your responsibilities in relation to nursing research and quality improvement?  
   yes ○   no ○

27. Can you explain why it’s important to choose refereed or peer-reviewed journals when looking for research articles?  
   yes ○   no ○

28. Can you explain how to decide whether you know enough to apply research findings to practice?  
   yes ○   no ○

29. Can you use critical thinking to create individualized teaching plans?  
   yes ○   no ○

30. Can you address the roles of memorizing and reasoning in teaching ourselves?  
   yes ○   no ○

31. Can you describe five strategies that can help you improve your test scores?  
   yes ○   no ○

32. Was the content relevant to the objectives?  
   yes ○   no ○

33. Was the teaching method effective?  
   yes ○   no ○

34. Did this offering meet your objectives?  
   yes ○   no ○

35. How many minutes did it take to read the material and complete this test?  
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26. Additional comments/Suggestions for future topics:  
   ______________________________________________________
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The purpose of this chapter is to define 17 key clinical reasoning skills, to explain why each skill promotes critical thinking, to give guidelines for accomplishing the skills, and to give opportunities to analyze and improve your thinking through the use of case scenarios. After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain why each skill in this section promotes clinical judgment.
- Explain how to accomplish each skill in this section.
- Be explicit about your thinking in various simulated clinical situations (clearly express how you came to a conclusion or made a decision).
- Develop a comprehensive plan of care.

1. Although the skills in this section are presented as separate skills, some of them are:
   a. combined and inter-related.
   b. often skipped in today’s healthcare setting.
   c. actually very similar to one another.
   d. one skill broken down into two or three.

2. The word EASE acts as a memory jog to remember:
   a. learning style preferences.
   b. assessment priorities.
   c. HIPAA requirements.
   d. care plan components.

3. Clinical reasoning today must be:
   a. problem-focused more than outcome focused.
   b. outcome-focused more than problem-focused.
   c. health oriented more than problem-focused.
   d. problem-focused and improvement oriented.

4. The best way to identify assumptions is to:
   a. perform an initial comprehensive assessment.
   b. make sure your sources are honest and up to date.
   c. compare patient data with standards and critical paths.
   d. look for them, asking questions and checking facts.

5. Choosing an organized, systematic approach to assessment:
   a. helps avoid errors due to omissions.
   b. is required by practice standards.
   c. promotes identification of assumptions.
   d. is more important for novices than experts.

6. Checking accuracy and reliability:
   a. requires checking with at least two sources.
   b. entails qualitative research approaches.
   c. promotes comprehensive data collection.
   d. involves two nurses looking at different perspectives.

7. Recognizing abnormal data is:
   a. of less importance in health promotion.
   b. the first step to problem identification.
   c. the most important part of decision-making.
   d. best learned through clinical experience.

8. The skill of "making inferences" means:
   a. drawing valid conclusions.
   b. making clinical decisions.
   c. making rapid decisions.
   d. building on previous experience.

9. Clustering related cues:
   a. is more important in theory than practice.
   b. helps you see patterns and relationships.
   c. is the first skill a novice needs to learn.
   d. promotes rapid decision-making.

10. Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant is:
    a. an innate talent or gift.
    b. difficult in rapid assessment.
    c. common sense, rather than critical thinking.
    d. especially difficult for novices.

11. An important step to recognizing inconsistencies is to:
    a. ask people if they’re sure they’re correct.
    b. assess from the patient’s frame of reference.
    c. check the patient before the critical path.
    d. compare what is stated with what you observe.

12. Identifying patterns:
    a. is the most important skill of clinical judgment.
    b. is a step that’s often skipped by expert clinicians.
    c. helps you get a beginning picture of problems.
    d. should be skipped in emergency situations.

13. One of the most common clinical reasoning errors is:
    a. making judgments based on incomplete information.
    b. failing to recognize patient "red flags".
    c. delaying treatment due to knowledge errors.
    d. failing to include computerized patient data.

14. Identifying risk factors:
    a. isn’t allowed in HIPAA documentation.
    b. promotes use of the PPMP approach.
    c. can create insurance problems for some people.
    d. is required by national practice standards.

15. Making definitive diagnoses is:
    a. the third step of clinical decision-making.
    b. essential to determining specific interventions.
    c. the final step of clinical decision-making.
    d. difficult to do with short lengths of stay.
16. Determining relationships among problems is:
   a. the first step to identifying assumptions.
   a. an exercise that can hide main issues.
   a. a key part of setting priorities.
   a. best done through logical reasoning.

17. The "80/20 Rule" applies to:
   a. performing a focused assessment.
   b. recognizing inconsistencies.
   c. setting priorities.
   d. identifying risk factors.

18. When describing expected outcomes, you should use verbs that are:
   a. observable and measurable.
   b. on the accepted NOC list.
   c. action oriented and active tense.
   d. reflective of the cognitive domain.

19. To determine specific nursing interventions,
   a. consider the problems and the expected outcomes.
   b. use only NIC-accepted terms.
   c. consider the problems and the symptoms.
   d. use both NIC and NOC accepted terms.

20. Self-regulating can best be described as:
   a. paying attention to our own emotions.
   b. promoting autonomous thinking.
   c. evaluating and correcting our thinking.
   d. facilitating self-sufficient thinking.

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**Answer Form**

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**Evaluation**

1. Can you explain why each skill in this section promotes clinical judgment? yes ☐ no ☐
2. Can you explain how to accomplish each skill in this section? yes ☐ no ☐
3. Can you be explicit about your thinking in various simulated clinical situations (clearly express how you came to a conclusion or made a decision)? yes ☐ no ☐
4. Can you develop a comprehensive plan of care? yes ☐ no ☐
5. Was the content relevant to the objectives? yes ☐ no ☐
6. Was the teaching method effective? yes ☐ no ☐
7. Did this offering meet your objectives? yes ☐ no ☐

8. How many minutes did it take to read the material and complete this test? ________________

9. Additional comments/Suggestions for future topics: ______________________________________
The purpose of this chapter is to help you explore how to accomplish 11 key common workplace skills (navigating and facilitating change, communicating bad news, dealing with complaints constructively, developing empowered partnerships, giving and taking feedback, managing conflict constructively, managing your time, preventing and dealing with mistakes constructively, transforming a group into a team, accessing and using information effectively, outcome-focused writing). After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define each of the 11 skills in this chapter.
- Explain how each of the 11 skills relate to critical thinking.
- Describe how to accomplish each of the 11 skills, giving specific strategies that will work for you.

1. Navigating and facilitating change requires you to know how to:
   a. implement new policies, procedures, and guidelines.
   b. help yourself and others accept daily challenges.
   c. chart a course to incorporate required changes and help others do the same.
   d. "sell" the importance of changes, as well as buy into them yourself.

2. When you delay communicating bad news you're likely to:
   a. buy important time to plan what to do about the bad news.
   b. increase feelings of anger, disappointment, and betrayal.
   c. reduce feelings of anger, disappointment, and betrayal.
   d. get opportunities to gather data to explain what happened.

3. Complaints should be:
   a. handled by patient care representatives.
   b. followed up with incident reports.
   c. handled by managers, rather than staff.
   d. viewed as opportunities to improve.

4. Some people are uncomfortable being in an empowered partnership because they:
   a. are afraid of causing problems for others.
   b. aren't accustomed to taking responsibility.
   c. worry that they don't know enough.
   d. don't understand leadership principles.

5. An important part of knowing how to give and take feedback is being:
   a. sensitive to personality differences.
   b. direct and to the point.
   c. careful not to hurt feelings.
   d. tactful about exactly what's wrong.

6. When you develop conflict management skills, you spend less time:
   a. dealing with the negative outcomes of conflict.
   b. explaining the benefits of your plan to others.
   c. helping others manage conflict.
   d. being in uncomfortable situations.

7. The "adrenaline rush" that sometimes accompanies conflict makes it:
   a. easier to get to the point.
   b. harder to think clearly.
   c. easier to be objective.
   d. difficult to use bio-feedback.

8. The first steps to managing your time is:
   a. determining a system for setting daily priorities.
   b. identifying time wasters and delegating them to others.
   c. writing down goals and keeping an activity log.
   d. getting organized and getting rid of clutter.

9. If a physician almost operates on the wrong site, but the mistake is caught just in time, this would be considered a:
   a. sentinel event.
   b. hazardous condition.
   c. near miss.
   d. perilous event.

10. When a mistake happens the first thing you should do is:
    a. determine the seriousness of the error and take steps to prevent or reduce harm.
    b. consult policies and procedures to decide how to report and document the error.
    c. explain to the patient that a mistake has happened and chart actions taken to address the error.
    d. explore the specifics of the error and examine the procedures and circumstances leading to it.

11. To make the changes needed to improve safety, the organizational culture must change from one that:
    a. is punitive when mistakes happen to one that welcomes the reporting of errors.
    b. values using unlicensed assistive personnel to one that uses only RN and LPN staff.
    c. is supportive of using paper documentation to one that uses computerized charting.
    d. uses its own error-reporting system to one that uses the ANA error-reporting system.

12. Team building stages usually happen in the following order:
    a. forming, storming, norming, performing
    b. norming, forming, storming, performing
    c. storming, norming, forming, performing
    d. norming, storming, forming, performing
13. True teamwork occurs when all team members:
   a. are focused on roles and responsibilities and care about patient individuality.
   b. pay attention to how they are treating each other on a daily basis.
   c. respect individual boundaries and avoid overstepping territories.
   d. are committed to common goals and care about how team members feel.

14. Knowing where and how to find, interpret, and apply information is:
   a. a new skill that replaces memorization.
   b. easier than knowing how to memorize.
   c. a vital workplace survival skill.
   d. an essential part of certification exams.

15. Outcome-focused writing means writing in a way that:
   a. communicates outcomes to all.
   b. focuses results on key values.
   c. addresses patient-centered outcomes.
   d. gets the results you want.

**Answer Form**

1. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
2. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
3. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
4. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
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11. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
12. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
13. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
14. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○
15. a. ○  b. ○  c. ○  d. ○

**Evaluation**

1. Can you define each of the 11 skills in this chapter? yes ○ no ○
2. Can you explain how each of the 11 skills relate to critical thinking? yes ○ no ○
3. Can you describe how to accomplish each of the 11 skills, giving specific strategies that will work for you? yes ○ no ○
4. Was the content relevant to the objectives? yes ○ no ○
5. Was the teaching method effective? yes ○ no ○
6. Did this offering meet your objectives? yes ○ no ○

7. How many minutes did it take to read the material and complete this test? __________________________

8. Additional comments/Suggestions for future topics: ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________