Evaluate the quality of your notes using the COIN Method

modified by URI AEC from COIN Method created by Dave Beeken’s http://beeken.net/

The **COIN Method** is a great way to see if your notes have the features in them that make them most useful for learning. Remember, the thinking done when *making* notes is as important as the thinking done when *using* them.

Take a look at the questions in these categories, and see if your notes meet the criteria. This may be a slow process at first, but after you try using it a few times, you may begin to see your note taking very differently!

**Content**

How much information is conveyed?
Are concepts adequately explained – can you explain them in full from your notes?
Are there examples included?
Do the notes suffice to help you remember in full detail?
Are questions or stars included to indicate where you have more to learn?
*(For class notes)* Are there more notes than what instructor wrote on board or slides?
Are slide-based notes been reworded in your own words?
*(for text based notes)* Are the notes in your own words?
Are they written using less than complete sentences?
Do they allow you to explain all that you should remember?*

**Organization**

How well is the information formatted?
Are the notes in a meaningful order?
Are subsets and subcategories obvious?
Are related concepts positioned so they indicate the relationship?
Are explanations and definitions abbreviated?
*(No sentences or paragraphs allowed!)*
Are major concepts underlined or highlighted for easy reference?

**Interaction**

Are opinions, thoughts and feedback included?
Are there pictures, diagrams, charts, maps embedded within the words and phrases?
Are things that need more attention highlighted or starred?

**Neatness**

Are the notes easy to read?
Are the notes condensed (fewer words, words per line, spaces between chunks, etc.)?
Have the notes been “cleaned up” (revised so crossouts are eliminated, illustrations improved, information relocated, etc.)
Is there white space on the page?

*remember, your notes should be enough to help your memory recall all that it needs to. But you may need to practice remembering, so they might not seem that way at first, even if they are. When you try this, and look into text materials to help, decide if you will need to add to the notes or just keep trying.*