How to Self-Evaluate Your Own Hypotheticals

Practice hypos are one of the most helpful tools for preparing for final exams. With completing practice hypos comes self-evaluating your own practice hypos. It is important to learn how to correctly self-evaluate your own work so you know exactly what you need to work on. If you are too strict on yourself you risk not walking into the exam with confidence; whereas if you are too lenient on yourself you will never fix issues that actually need to be fixed and will walk into the exam with false confidence. Learning how to self-evaluate your own practice hypos is also important because it helps you start to think like a grader. When you think like a grader the quality of your answers will improve drastically because you know exactly what your professor is looking for and you can be sure to include all of those points in your answers.

Sometimes you are sent a hypo by your professor, an ASF, or you find one online that does not have an associated answer key with it. Here is what you should focus on when you grade your own answer without an answer key:

IRAC and Organization
★ Is my response organized in a way that makes sense?
★ Do the issues flow logically from one another?
★ Am I following IRAC format?
★ Is there a specific way my professor wanted the exam answer organized? Did I follow that?
★ Are there conclusions that I made too soon because I was not finished with my analysis?
  ○ For example: "*The defendant had the requisite intent because it was his purpose to cause contact since he wanted revenge on the plaintiff. Therefore, since there was intent, the defendant would be held liable for battery. The next issue is then whether there was contact.*" This does not make sense because you would want to address all of the elements of battery *before* drawing a conclusion about whether there was a battery or not.

Issue Spotting
★ What issues were the hardest for me to address?
  ○ Do I understand these issues after answering this hypo?
★ Were there facts that indicated another possible cause of action that I did not address?
★ Are there facts I did not use that I could have to make my analysis stronger?
★ For the things I missed, how can I catch these issues better next time?

Issue
★ Do I have an issue statement?
★ Should I do more hypos on this issue because I do not understand it very well?

Rule
★ Is there anything else I could have included that is relevant?

★ Is there anything I included that was not relevant?

★ Did I explain the rules correctly?

★ Did I cite any relevant case rules?

★ Do my rule paragraphs flow from general to specific?

Application

★ Did I make any conclusory statements?

★ Did I fully apply each rule in my rule paragraph?

★ Was I clear in my arguments? Is there anything I could have done to be more clear?

★ Did I present all reasonable counter arguments?

Conclusion

★ Does my conclusion flow logically from the points made in the application section?

★ Is my conclusion brief?

Timing

★ How long did I take to answer this hypo? Would I be able to take that much time on this question in an exam setting?
   ○ If there is a suggested time limit for the hypo, were you within the limit?
   ○ If you took too much time, how can you answer hypos like this more efficiently in the future?

★ If I had extra time, did I proofread to make sure I finished my thoughts and didn't make typos?

Other times the hypo you are working on might have come with an answer key. It is important to keep in mind that unless this answer key (or model answer) came from your professor, your answer likely will not match the answer key exactly. If it was not written by your professor then it was written by someone else who may teach the law differently, discuss different cases, and focus on different concepts. What is most important is figuring out whether you caught the major issues and if your answer is organized logically. You will find that many of the self-evaluation questions to ask yourself are the same.

IRAC and Organization

★ How similar is my answer to the answer key?

★ Is the key organized differently than my answer?
   ○ If yes, does my answer still make sense the way it is organized? How does my professor want my answers organized?

Issue Spotting

★ Did I miss any issues?

★ For the issues I missed, how can I catch these issues better next time?

★ Are there issues I mentioned that weren't mentioned in the key?

Issue

- Did I correctly identify the issue?
- Should I do more hypos on this issue because I do not understand it very well?

<u>Rule</u>

★ Is there anything else I could have included that is relevant?

★ Is there anything I included that was not relevant?

★ Did I explain the rules correctly?

★ Did I cite any relevant case rules?

★ Do my rule paragraphs flow from general to specific?

<u>Application</u>

★ Did I make any conclusory statements?

★ Did I fully apply each rule in my rule paragraph?

★ Was I clear in my arguments? Is there anything I could have done to be more clear?

★ Did I present all reasonable counter arguments the answer key brings up?

<u>Conclusion</u>

★ Does my conclusion flow logically from the points made in the application section?

★ Is my conclusion brief?

<u>Timing</u>

★ How long did I take to answer this hypo? Would I be able to take that much time on this question in an exam setting?
  ○ If there is a suggested time limit for the hypo, were you within the limit?
  ○ If you took too much time, how can you answer hypos like this more efficiently in the future?

★ If I had extra time, did I proofread to make sure I finished my thoughts and didn't make typos?