

Week Two- Learning to Think Critically and to Slow Down and Listen During Depositions

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Week two flew by! I participated in two mediations and got a behind the scenes view of negotiation strategy. Even though it was my first time participating in a mediation, my supervising attorneys encouraged me to apply my law school knowledge to real world scenarios where I was expected to be my client's advocate.

In my first mediation, associate and summer program alum Robert Barton showed me how you can be compassionate towards a plaintiff's hardships, while being completely transparent about how you and your client view the reality of the case. Basically, you can be a zealous advocate **and** maintain the highest standards of professionalism.

Later in the week, partner Rob Blank encouraged me to share my assessment of a case during mediation. Even when I am a little off, experience like this encourages me to think critically and see details of the case I may miss at first. The mediations also allowed me to interact with clients, which is an opportunity most law students do not receive.

Maybe this already sounds like a full week, but it was just the beginning. The class of summer associates participated in a deposition seminar and workshop taught by partner David Marsey. We learned the ins and outs of deposition practice in Florida and then put this knowledge to the test when we each took our first (mock) deposition. I was nervous for the deposition, but tried to remember to have fun with it. The biggest thing I learned was to SLOW DOWN & LISTEN! When taking a deposition, you should pause after the witness answers a question to digest and think through their answer—you never know when they could say something you need to explore further. If you're moving too fast, you'll miss it.

I also worked on research assignments for several attorneys, allowing me to get exposure to multiple areas of the firm's practice, such as trucking and amusement park cases.