

The Five Steps card

Choose one meaningful decision. Keep the student's next action connected to what you need to judge.

01 Identify what most needs attention.

Notice an obstacle or a promising question. Is the difficulty in the work, your interpretation, or the assignment?

02 Focus the feedback.

Mark a passage worth examining. Give direction without deciding in advance what the student must discover.

03 Name the principle that travels.

Name the idea guiding the inquiry or revision so it can guide another passage, task, or setting.

04 Ask for an action you can examine.

Ask the student to revise, explain, compare, or apply. Choose an action whose result could change your next decision.

05 Interpret the response and decide what follows.

State what the response supports, what remains uncertain, and whether to stop, adjust, or raise a course-design question.

An unclear position - or a better question?

Illustrative example; task, rubric, sources, and exchange invented. No actual student work.

"I began in favor. Now I'm asking: flexible for whom?"

Task / rubric: Argue for or against flexible deadlines. "Defend one clear position."

Signal: The position looks unsettled. The question may reveal a useful distinction.

Principle: A defensible argument can become more conditional as inquiry deepens.

Show me: In your next scheduled draft, show what unsettled your position. What can you defend now, and what remains unresolved?

Student: "One source describes caregivers needing time; another shows teammates waiting. I can defend flexibility for individual tasks. Who bears the cost in group work?"

Judgment: I first saw indecision; now I see a distinction to examine in the scheduled revision. Apply existing criteria and explain what they recognize or miss. Flag a rubric conflict for course review.

Stop when the evidence is sufficient for the intended claim. Consider available assistance. If the same obstacle recurs, examine whether its source lies in the assignment or policy.