How to build a summary statement:

Summary statements are only two or three sentences, and they should reflect only the most important information that a student has provided. Generally, a summary statement follows this order:

1. Lead into the summary.
   
   Examples:  
   “Here’s what I’m hearing so far.”  
   “Let me see if I can summarize this for you.”  
   “Can I check if I’m understanding you correctly?”

2. Include a statement (from the student’s experience) that reflects change or growth.
   
   Examples:  
   “You want to change this, but you’re not sure how yet.”  
   “You’re noticing a problem here, and you want to ward it off.”  
   “You’d like to get back on track in this class.”  
   “You feel that the author of this paper is mistaken in their opinions.”

3. Include a statement (from the student’s experience) that reflects why it is difficult to change or grow.
   
   Examples:  
   “You’re very busy and it’s hard to change your habits.”  
   “It’s uncomfortable to bring this up with your small group.”  
   “You’re unclear about your first steps.”  
   “You don’t want to question authority on this text.”  
   “You don’t want to criticize your friend.”

4. If the student has made a plan or deciding upon a first step of action, include that here. If the student has decided on specifics, include them here.
   
   Examples:  
   “You’re going to visit the tutoring center tomorrow night.”  
   “You’re going to office hours to discuss this with the Professor.”  
   “You’re going to do some more reading, and then get back to me.”

5. End with an invitation for clarification.
   
   Examples:  
   “What have I missed?”  
   “Anything I should add or correct?”  
   “Does that sound right to you?”
**Case study:**

**Student:** “I am loving this class. I didn’t really understand what yoga was all about. I thought it was just a body-mind exercise, and I didn’t understand the spiritual connections at all.”

**Fellow:** “This course has changed your mind about yoga.”

**Student:** “Yes, and I think it’s an important change. I think that you get more out of practice when it’s more authentic, and Western yoga doesn’t seem authentic at all. Now I feel kind of guilty when I go to my yoga class at the gym.”

**Fellow:** “Your class is important to you, and you feel differently towards it now.”

**Student:** “Yes! Exactly. Like the word “namaste” doesn’t even mean what we think it means. It feels fake. My teacher’s a really good person, but I don’t think he gets the deeper meaning.”

**Fellow:** “Is this something you want to share with him?”

**Student:** “Yes, maybe. I’m not sure. He’s really nice. I don’t want to offend him. But I also think that we’ve really, as a culture, misappropriated yoga. I feel like we’re not doing it right, or maybe we should call it something different. I don’t know. I’m working through it. This course really hit me.”

**Fellow:** “Let me see if I’m understanding you. Feel free to correct me if I’m wrong. You’ve had a powerful experience in this class, and it’s changed your mind about something you really like. You’re interested in bringing this information to other people, but you’re not sure how to do it in the most polite way possible. Does that sound right?”