



Managing Grading Loads

One of the causes of teacher burnout is the grading load. The tips below come from experienced faculty in several disciplines. Even a small change can alleviate one common source of stress!

Use technology

- Try making audio comments to essays rather than written comments using a program such as Audacity. You can say more in a shorter time. Save the sound files and send them by email to students or post them in your course management system. The students can listen to them on any Mp3 player or almost any computer.
- Online course management tools such as “quizzes” are great! They are automatically graded and sent to the gradebook.

In class

- Group quizzes reduce the number of papers.
- Give homework that is used during a class activity, rather than collected.
- Some things can be graded in class by having students exchange papers. Students also know right away how they did and what the correct answers were. You just collect them in order to record them.
- Students can self-grade math problems if they work in pairs or triads. Post the answers (or put answers on a card). Students who finish early can be “tutor of the day” to assist slower groups.
- Assign roles to group members (and rotate the roles) so that everyone participates. Each role gets a score.

Grading papers/assignments/tests

- Rubrics make grading go faster and grading is more consistent.
- It's not always necessary to give feedback on everything students do - sometimes getting them to do it is enough.
- Use a highlighter to mark student papers. Rather than write lengthy explanations, highlight the part of the sentence that has a problem and ask the students to identify their errors.
- Some assignments are just graded Yes or No. Students get the points or they don't. These are very small point assignments (5 points or less) and reward students for completing them, but you don't need to analyze them.
- For essay questions, read all students' answer to the first one, then all students' answers to the next. That way you can really hone in on all the possible correct answers without forgetting. It is easier to rank the answers from highest to lowest, too, if that helps you decide on points.
- Grade the top two students' tests first to see if there are any problem questions. Then you might not waste time commenting on many students' papers (you might even not count the question).

Planning

<http://encoreprodev.com/>



- Make a plan for yourself in advance so that you don't get caught with 10 things due the next day.
- Use a scoring guide (or rubric), but give it to students when you give the assignment, not just after you grade it. Ask the students to look at the column that describes the highest score and to check their work to see if they would rate themselves that high. It can reduce the number of students who don't follow the directions of the assignment or who have to come ask for clarification.

End of semester tips

- Try to have grades almost all figured out so that you can just grade the final exam and add it in. Be careful about what you assign (that needs grading) at the end of the semester so that you don't get swamped, especially if you have a final exam at the end of the exam week.
- Make your final exam shorter, but representing higher level questions, and use the earlier exams or assignments in the semester for checking on prerequisite (to the final exam) skills.
- Make deadlines for other assignments or late work (if you accept it) well before final exam week! Then you can focus on only grading the final exam or paper at that time.