Strategies for Grading Effectively

1. **Share feedback** – allow feedback to be part of the learning experience. Create space for students to ask for and receive feedback during class. Other students will be able to see the feedback and also learn from it. You will end up repeating feedback less often.
2. **Automate grading** - wherever possible, use tools that make grading automatic (such as quizzes in eLearn) or drastically reduce time to grade (such as rubrics in eLearn)
3. **Provide audio feedback** – record yourself talking aloud while grading, rather than writing up comments later. This can help to convey tone as well as speed up the grading process by reducing the number of decisions you as the instructor need to make about which comments to share.
4. **Use detailed rubrics** – detailed rubrics not only provide feedback to students, but also clarify expectations, therefore reducing the number of questions you'll get by email. Integrate your rubrics into eLearn to reduce time spent managing documents.
5. **Reduce number of assignments** - review your learning outcomes and determine which assignments, and how many, are absolutely essential for students to illustrate competency. Multiple small-stakes assignments may actually create more stress for students than fewer large-stakes assignments. Consider scaffolding assignments rather than having multiple small assignments.
6. **Scaffold assignments –** To reduce the overall number of assignments without compromising how students illustrate their learning, consider breaking down assignments into component parts that build on one another. Having students hand in each component will help them to manage time and allow you to decide which components need feedback and which need grades, allowing you to reduce your overall marking load.
7. **Don't grade everything** - If it is not possible to reduce the number of assignments, consider providing only feedback on some and only grades on others. Do you need to grade everything your students produce? Where can peer and self-assessment be used as a means of feedback before submission? Where would feedback from the instructor be the most beneficial? Have students self-assess with your rubric – only give feedback where you don't agree.
8. **Make assignments pass/fail** – Not all assignments require a grade to be assigned, particularly those that will later contribute to a portfolio or final assignment that will be fully graded. Regularized assignments, such as journaling, can benefit from a pass/fail system.
9. **Focus your feedback** – While preferring specific feedback, students are often overwhelmed by the sheer amount of feedback they receive. To provide specific, but focused feedback, try telling students *only* what they did well, what could have been better, and what they need to do for next time. If you limit yourself to one sentence per prompt, even better!
10. **Grade in class** – If your students make presentations, do the grading as they present, rather than watching a recording later on. If it's not a presentation-based assignment, you could have students present their work in a showcase in real time while you grade.
11. **Schedule your grading time** – Create a grading schedule by compiling all the due dates for all of your courses. Estimate the time needed to grade each individual assignment and multiply that by number of students. Schedule this time into your calendar and treat it like a meeting. Try not to schedule it on a weekend!