Strategies for More Efficient Grading

1. Separate grading from commenting
   With each student assignment, reflect on whether an assignment needs to be graded. Try asking:
   - Why am I assigning a grade to this?
   - Will the benefits be worth the time that I spend on it?
   - Could I do something else?
     ✓ Offer credit for completing the assignment?
     ✓ Comment on the work without assigning a grade?
     ✓ Incorporate the assignment into a larger, graded work, such as a portfolio?
   Walvord and Johnson (1998) stress the importance of communicating the importance of the assignment to students so that they do not feel as if their work is in vain.

2. Optional grading and other feedback
   - Minimize the amount of comments. If students wish to receive additional comments on assignments, encourage them to request it.
   - Consider giving feedback through a variety of media, including face-to-face conversations, video or audio podcasts, virtual office hours, editing feature on Wordprocessing applications, Jing, or e-mail.

3. Use Only As Many Grade Levels As You Need
   Grading scaling options:
   **Most Efficient**
   - Two-level system (Pass, Fail)
   - Three-level system (Outstanding, Competent, Unacceptable)
   - Four-level system (√+, √, √-, 0)
   - Five-level system (A-F)
   **Least Efficient**
   - Thirteen-level system (A+ to F)

4. Frame Comments for Your Students’ Use
   - Your goal is to ensure accurate and useful feedback for your student.
   - Extensive comments on drafts may be more worthwhile than those on final versions because there is still opportunity for students to improve their grades.
   - Give students the option of receiving extensive comments explaining areas for improvement.
   - Focus your comments rather than commenting on everything.
5. **Why Waste Time on Careless Student Work? Try these ideas instead:**
   - Arrange for students to evaluate each other’s work before revising and turning in for a grade from the instructor.
   - Direct students to have their work checked by the Writing Center before they turn in their work.

6. **Use Technology**
   - Write comments on the computer. You can cut and paste frequently used comments.
   - Give feedback on an electronic copy of an assignment and upload the comments on ICON.
   - Use grading tools available on ICON.
   - Record audio files with feedback. Oftentimes you can say more in five minutes than you can write.
   - Be available via e-mail and office hours so that you can answer students’ questions during the drafting process rather than extensive comments at the end.

**Reference:**