EIGHT STRATEGIES
FOR MANAGING THE PAPER LOAD

from the apenglish electronic discussion group

1. Give students choice in topic (within the parameters of your content) so they are invested and you have a variety of papers to read.

2. Set a page limit and emphasize proving the thesis with apt, clearly written support. Less can be more.

3. Assign two short papers and ask the students to determine (perhaps with the help of other students) which one they want you to respond to. Collect both papers.

4. Give students the opportunity to share their first drafts with others in a structured writing team. The quality of the writing that you receive in the next draft will be higher. You will spend less time correcting misconceptions about the assignment and silly errors.

5. Teach the students oral presentation skills and use this mode for several presentations each marking period. These presentations can show you a great deal about student learning yet can be evaluated "on the spot."

6. Give the students an opportunity to show their understanding of a work of literature and its author's style by imitating it. This type of assignment is both analytical and creative. Students tend to invest and the resulting work is interesting to read. Students can also be asked to perform their pieces in class, which makes it possible for you to become familiar with them before you actually need to read and grade them.

7. Ask students to evaluate their own writing, using your performance standards. This can provide you with insight into the students' processes and make grading easier.

8. Conclude the activities for the last unit of study in the marking period a week prior to the end of the marking period. This will give you time to read and evaluate final projects and share grades with students before you're under pressure to report grades on line.