0.1 Grading

The message here is the same as in the previous section. Include in your course packet a clearly defined grading policy, specifying what portions of the grade are from homework, exams, quizzes, projects, group work, attendance, or whatever else you grade on. Give it enough thought so that you remember it easily, and can answer their questions immediately. If historical grade distribution data is available, you would be well advised to stick to it, since this will help to allay fears that the unusual pedagogical style will adversely affect their grade.

If you find yourself spending too much time grading the students' assignments, then you're in good company. They learn a lot from this, so I encourage you to do as much as you can stomach in the way of grading writeups. That being said, there are ways to reduce the workload a little. Every now and then you can assign a group assignment instead of an individual assignment. Don't do this more than once between each change of group assignments, and make sure the assignment is appropriate for a group writeup. Realize that it is hard for them to find time to meet outside of class, so ideally the assignment should combine what they were able to work out together in class with some labor they can easily divide and do at home. Another useful tactic is multiple choice questions on exams. I always include multiple choice or True/False sections on exams, since the purpose of these is evaluation and not instruction. Of course you need to save room on the exams for questions where more thorough explanations are demanded. Another useful device is to assign only 1/3 to 1/2 of the worksheets for writing up. Don't tell them which will be written up until you've spent all the class time you're going to spend on them, then assign the worksheet as a writeup or don't.