

Mentoring Tips

1. Plan early, The sooner you give the U Day project a place in your syllabus, the better prepared you will be. Think about the project and the learning outcomes well before the semester begins.
2. Discuss University Day the first day of the semester as part of your course introduction. Sell it. Let students see what others have done. Explain that the skills they will develop will be welcome in any graduate school program or by any employer.
3. Make it a group project and help students access their strengths. Work carefully here. In small classes or in an honors class, each member will present individual research. In a large class, there is a group presentation. Often some students will not be the ones who wish to present. Often in a group of 5, all do research, all do some form of project editing, but only one and two will do the presentation. All get credit. Meet with this group at least twice.
4. Each group of students should have a project prospectus and a bibliography ready to show you around five weeks into the semester. Earlier if possible. This eliminates subject dead ends (ones that are too obscure to research) and gives time for an alternative subject. Even better, have them discuss their potential subject with you a few weeks into the semester. This is often necessary for a 100 level class that has less research experience.
5. Make sure your due date for the presentation is at least TWO WEEKS before University Day. Meet with each group and critique their work. Advise them.
6. A full week to ten days out, have a rehearsal. This includes all slide shows and videos as well as an oral presentation. Timing is critical and you'll often find the first effort needs editing to meet the limits imposed by the schedule. It usually is quite a shock to students that they ran 15 minutes long when they thought they would be 10 minutes short. Technical problems will appear here with time for a resolution. Discuss how students should be dressed (mention it again if it is already part of your scoring criteria).
7. A couple of days before, have a dress rehearsal. This should be as ready as it is going to be!
8. Redundancy is a virtue. Make sure the students have the presentation on Google Drive, a stick, and loaded to Blackboard. It is also wise to have a printout. You ALWAYS need two students or more in the group ready to present as well. Sickness and emergencies can come at anytime!
9. It may seem obvious, but be there when your students present! And look good for them!
10. And what next? Often after U Day the class gets deflated. It takes a lot of energy and sometimes the next five weeks can seem to limp along with little energy. This was my

experience my first couple of years. So roll their group research into individual papers and projects. Keep them working on it. Or carefully plan the projects that cover the last five or six weeks of the semester that are interesting and add to their experience. A class or group museum trip is one activity. Or occasionally I will start a short Reacting to the Past role playing game (related, if possible, to their project). The key thing is: plan for the end of the semester activities along with designing your U Day project.