Top Ten Research Pitfalls

Skills
Do students have the research skills needed to complete the assignment? If not, they might need library instruction. Modeling of the process by the instructor or a librarian can be helpful.

Procrastination
Turning a project into parts with separate due dates will allow for feedback and incremental improvement. For example: you could require an outline, annotated bibliography, rough draft, research log, etc..

Bottleneck
Avoid Resource Traffic Jams. Consider placing heavy-demand items on Reserve or giving broad topic choices.

Help
Don’t forget to mention where in the Library students can go for research help or writing help. Also, if they start early enough they can get materials through interlibrary loan!

Resource
Suggest specific databases or LibGuides to students by name.

Integration
Students learn research skills and course content simultaneously. Integrate Info. Lit. assignments with your course objectives.

Limitations
Be cautious with limitations: students might not understand “you may not use the Internet” or “no encyclopedias.”

Ethics
Ask for proper source citation in a clearly defined style format.

Topics
If the topic is new or local, students can’t find traditional library research as there will be little information published.

Evaluation
Explain how the research component will be evaluated.