

Dilemma: Youth in charge, but falling behind

High school-aged youth in a leadership program were in charge of planning a 2 two-day summer day camp for fourth graders. The same young people had worked side-by-side with Mr. Miller, the advisor, in planning the day camp in prior years, so he decided they were ready to take control over development of the camp this year. He told them it would be “their camp” – and the youth relished the challenge. In the first stage, they were very excited as they generated ideas.

However, once the topics to be covered with the children were chosen, many youth acted as though the task of planning the day camp was done. Some lost interest as the work of preparation turned out to be less fun than spinning out ideas. The group seemed unable to take things to the next step of planning out specific activities. When some youth suggested specific ideas, conflicts emerged.

The fourth graders were registered and the dates for the day camp were approaching. Up until now, Mr. Baker had tried to let youth work through things on their own, but he could see that there were many details of the day camp that youth had not thought through.