

Catalyst Type: Illustrations

Illustrations are visual prompts that pose a dilemma. While the problem may appear self-evident on the surface, the cause of the problem (and approaches to resolving it) should be less apparent and open for interpretation. In the illustration on this page, for example, readers may easily agree that the mother is distressed because she can't understand a letter from the school. How the responsibility for that communication should be shared between immigrant parents and schools may draw far less agreement. Moreover, readers may have varied reactions to the content of the communication (in this case, the transfer of an immigrant child into Special Education) and divergent advice about what the mother should do. A good catalyst will surface many possibilities and perspectives, drawing upon the collective knowledge and experience of the group to explore the multiple dimensions of an issue.

School and Home

by Lenore Balliro and Andy Nash

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Discussion Questions

1. Who are they?
2. Where are they?
3. How does the mother feel? Why?
4. Why is the letter only in English?
5. Should she sign the paper? Why?
6. What happens if she signs it?
7. What should she do?
8. Do you get notices from your child's school in English?
9. What do you do?



Discussion Questions

1. Compare this picture to the first one. What is different?
2. How does the mother feel? Why?
3. What should she do?
4. What could happen to the child if she signs the paper?

Follow Up

- Have students role play follow-up situations from both scenarios. (For example, for the second picture, have the mother call the school or visit the school to complain.)
- Generate questions that students have about the school and send the class's questions to the school.
- Bring in information about school resources and talk about how to use each one.
- Invite a speaker from the school to address the class.

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