

Comic Strip Conversations

By Carol Gray

WHAT ARE COMIC STRIP CONVERSATIONS?

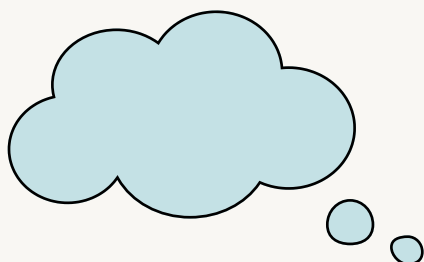


Comic strip conversations use **drawings** (often stick men) and shapes to **represent conversations**. Comic strip conversations presents information **visually**, therefore supports children who have communication difficulties and struggle to understand the quick exchange that happens during a conversation.

WHAT DO COMIC STRIP CONVERSATIONS SHOW?

1

What people may actually **say** during a conversation. (represented by a **speech bubble**).



2

What they themselves or others may be **thinking** in social situations (represented by a **thought bubble**).

3

The child how to **express their own feelings** in social situations and understand how other people may be feeling (using **colours** to represent different emotions).



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HOW CAN COMIC STRIP CONVERSATIONS HELP?

1

Makes abstract components of social communication (e.g., predicting other's thoughts) more **concrete**.

2

Helps to teach children some of the **rules** of **conversations**.

3

Can be used to **work through a problem**, identify solutions to a problem or clarify misunderstandings.

4

Can be used before a **planned event** to help to prepare children for what they might say in the social situation (e.g. during an exam).

5

Allows adult's to **understand** the **child's thought process** more clearly and may explain why misunderstandings have occurred.

6

Information is presented **visually**, therefore will support children who **struggle** to process verbal information quickly.

HOW DO I USE COMIC STRIP CONVERSATIONS?

1

THE CHILD SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE THE LEAD

- The child should always **take the lead** when creating comic strip conversations. Adults are there to **facilitate**. All you need is a pen/pencil and paper to start your comic strip conversation!



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2

ENCOURAGE THE CHILD TO DRAW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE EVENT



- Initially, adults should model using comic strip conversation to discuss **positive social** situations. Then you can move on to difficult social situations. Ask the child to sketch where they were and draw stick people to represent the child and others who are involved in the event (please **see example** for support). Explain to the child that you are drawing to help them to understand/remember the event.

3

GUIDE THE SKETCH WITH QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS



Support the child to think about what may have been said/what people may have thought. Useful questions to **guide** the child may be:

- So you said.... And then what did he say?
- Can you guess what he might have been thinking?
- Can you show me what he was thinking?
- Can you show me how you were feeling?
- Where were you?
- Who were you with?
- What happened?

4

CORRECT THEIR INTERPRETATION

- You may need to **correct** their interpretation of what **happened/thoughts** of others. You can do this by either creating a second version of the comic strip conversation or crossing out the first thought bubble and replacing it with something more accurate.



5

TALK THROUGH THE SKETCH

- Ask the child to **talk you through** the sketch when it is finished.



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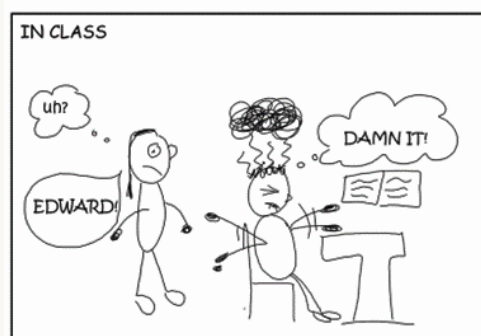
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COMIC STRIP CONVERSATION EXAMPLE

Questions or comments which the adult may use as a **prompt** provided in the box above the sketch

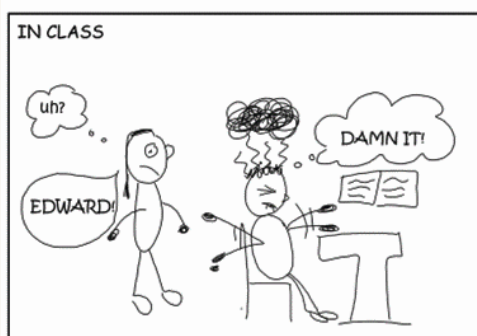
1

"So can you draw what happened..."



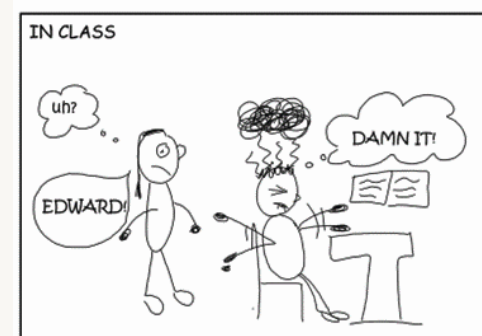
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"What thoughts were in your head?"



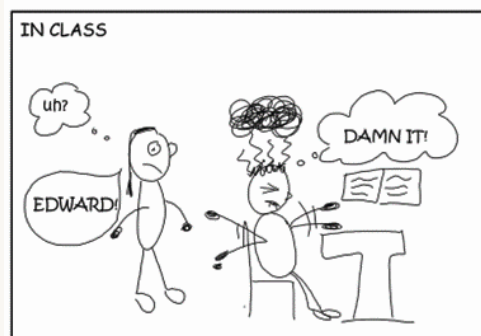
3

"What did Miss Jones say?"



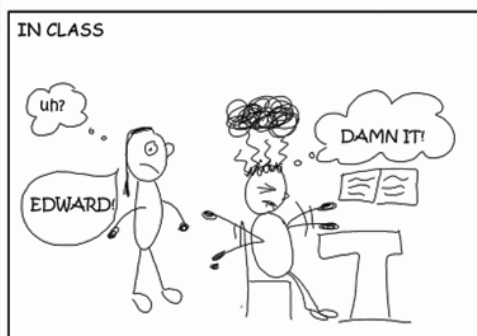
4

"And I wonder what she was thinking?"



5

"What do you mean by 'uh'?"



*We can then move
on to think about
what might work
better....*

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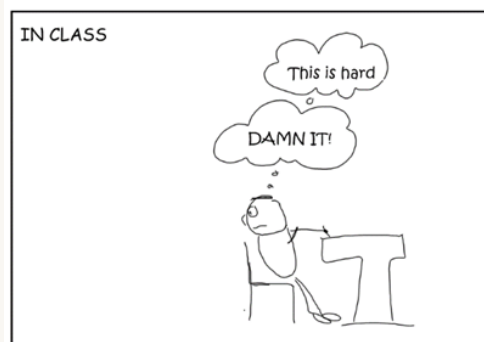
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COMIC STRIP CONVERSATION EXAMPLE

Problem solving or seeing what might work better:

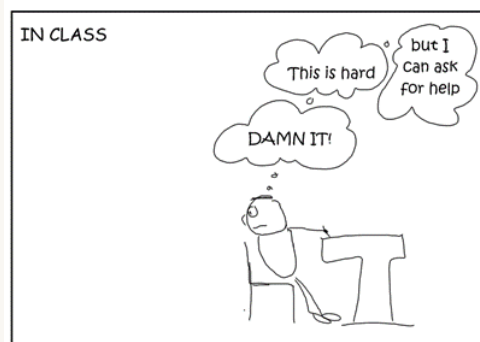
1

"So you're thinking...."



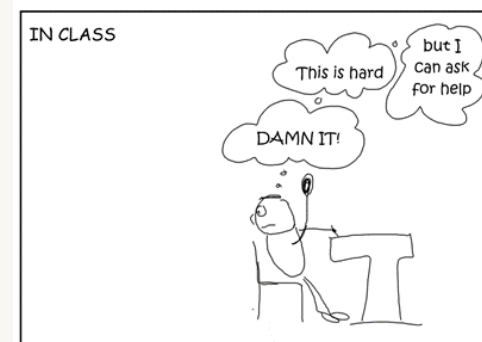
2

"What else could you think?"



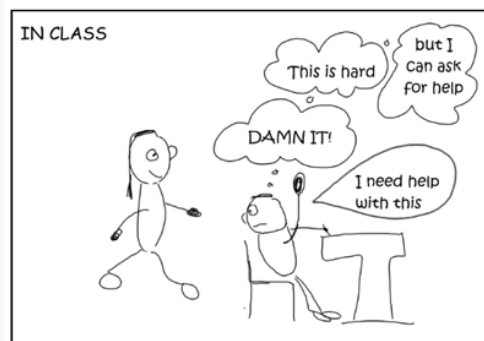
3

"So you could...."



4

"And when the teacher notices, you could say...."



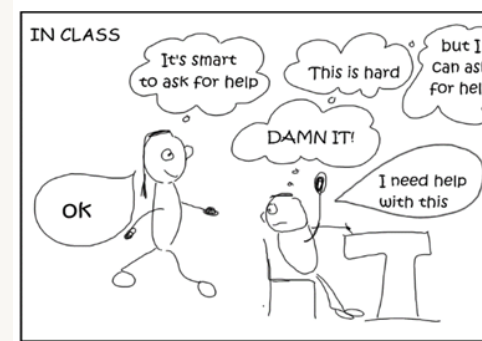
5

"The teacher would probably say..."



6

"And she'd probably think...."



Further information on comic strip conversations:

· <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>

· Comic strip conversations: illustrated interactions with students with autism and related disorders, Carol Gray 1994.