



# BARR<sup>®</sup>

BUILDING ASSETS  
REDUCING RISKS

A School  
Improvement  
Model for  
Grades K-12



Angela  
Jerabek, MS



**GRADES 3-5**  
CLASSROOM CURRICULUM



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“I’m deeply inspired by the work the BARR Center does around relationships, because I know you’re saving lives every day.”

—John B. King Jr., EdD  
Former U.S. Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education

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“*BARR* has enabled me to deepen my relationships with my students and families. It has also provided a structure that encourages me to collect and use data with purpose.”

—Kelly Hoskins  
Fifth-grade teacher, Lake Elmo Elementary School  
Stillwater, Minnesota

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“The *BARR* model matches well with all of the core programming that we believe is best for kids.”

—Dave Webb, EdD  
Superintendent, South Saint Paul Public Schools  
South Saint Paul, Minnesota

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“I really like spending time with kids in my class. I get to know them really well, and I get to see them every day.”

—*BARR* student

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“Grades are a good indicator of how a student is doing, but if you just look at grades, you miss a lot of things: social changes, friend-group changes, attendance, health, all of a sudden a student is getting too skinny. . . . It’s like a puzzle, and everybody holds a piece of the puzzle, so when we are all together, we can see the whole kid.”

—Janice Eldridge  
Former high school social studies teacher  
and current Director of Schools, BARR Center  
New Market, Maryland

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“*BARR* is equity at its best. The *BARR* structure helps us to see every student with a strength-based mindset and support them with academic and nonacademic interventions regardless of their race, religion, gender identity, disability, or socioeconomic status.”

—Matt Kraft  
Assistant Principal, Stillwater Area High School  
Stillwater, Minnesota

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“From a parent perspective, we get to see that the teachers are really connecting with the students. . . . They take an interest in students above and beyond academics. . . . The relationship building is huge. To me, that’s what makes it—when my kids come home and they are so excited because a teacher gave them a nickname. From then on, math is awesome, and they are motivated and they’re going to work hard and they’re going to figure things out.”

—Carrie Jennissen  
Mother of two students  
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

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“Lake Elmo is thrilled to be part of the *BARR* team, and our staff is looking forward to implementing *BARR* this year. We recognize the variety of ways *BARR* will enhance our focus on equity holding us accountable to ensure we meet the needs of all our students!”

—Stephen Gorde  
Principal, Lake Elmo Elementary School  
Stillwater, Minnesota

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“*BARR* has changed the culture of our school. Our school board and school community has clearly identified the *BARR* program as one of our district’s essential pieces to student growth and achievement.”

—Josh Tripp  
Principal, Bucksport High School  
Bucksport, Maine

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# BUILDING ASSETS

# Reducing Risks

A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL FOR GRADES K–12

CLASSROOM CURRICULUM  
**Grades 3 through 5**

VOLUME 1



**Angela Jerabek, MS**



*BARR* is listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) and recognized by the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), the U.S. Department of Education's "Investing in Innovation" (i3) initiative, and the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).

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*Editor's notes*

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Readers should be aware that websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read.

The Nel Noddings quote from *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* is reprinted on page 11 with permission from the author.

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## Session 8: Conversation Dice


### TIME NEEDED

- 30 minutes


### ASSET CATEGORIES

- Social Competencies
- Support

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Dice, one die per pair of participants
- Conversation Dice Questions handout
- Timer
- *Optional:* Bell


### PREPARATION NEEDED

- Gather the materials needed.
- Photocopy/print out the language-appropriate Conversation Dice Questions handout, one per pair of participants.

### Purpose

- To provide an opportunity for participants and the facilitator to develop relationships
- To build conversation skills

### Instructions

1. Explain the exercise and its purpose to the participants by saying:  
**Have you ever entered a room and not known anyone? Sometimes it can feel overwhelming and hard to know whom to approach and how to start a conversation. We are going to do an activity today that involves practicing how to start a conversation with another person you do not already know well. Hopefully, we will also find out new things about each other.**
2. Help the participants find a classmate whom they do not know well by numbering off, picking name sticks, or using some other random partner-choosing method. If you have an odd number of participants, have one group of three. Be sure you participate in this activity as well.
3. When the participants have all found partners, provide each pair with the Conversation Dice Questions handout and one die. Tell them that they will take turns rolling the die and answering questions.
4. Tell participants that the person in each pair whose birthday is next will start. That person will roll the die and look at the list of questions listed below “Roll 1.” They will answer the question that has the same number as the number on the die. Each of the nine rolls has a separate set of questions that both participants will answer, depending on the number they roll.



5. Give each person about thirty seconds to answer their question. Then ring a bell or find another way to let participants know when to switch.
6. The partners will alternate rolling the die and sharing an answer nine times each.
7. When the participants have finished all nine rolls per person, ask them to talk with their partner and identify one interesting fact about them that they learned during their conversations.
8. Allow time for participants to share their partner's one interesting fact with the class, if both partners feel comfortable doing so.
9. Ask the participants if they found out new information about their partner. Ask the group if it was easier to have a list of questions to work from when starting a conversation.

**NOTES**

## Optional Follow-Up

This activity could be used several times throughout the school year. The facilitator needs only to be sure participants are paired with new partners each time.

## Data-Gathering Ideas

- Who had a hard time coming up with answers to share with their partner?
- Who was not comfortable engaging in conversation with their partner?
- Were there any questions that were easier for participants to answer than others?

## Adaptations for Distance Learning

### **Materials and Preparation Needed**

Everyone will need:

- Internet access, an individual device, and a shared virtual classroom platform
- Virtual dice roller or a die from home
- A digital copy of the Conversation Dice Questions handout

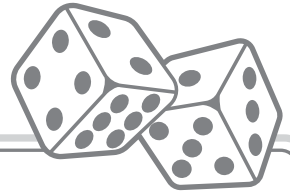
### **Virtual Modifications**

- Place participants in breakout rooms to play the game.
- Use the honor system for them to switch or find a way to notify breakout rooms of the need to switch speakers.
- Broadcast notifications to the group when time is halfway over.

You may need to shorten the number of questions they discuss in breakout rooms (due to time limitations).

### NOTES

## Conversation Dice Questions



### Roll 1

1. What did you do this past weekend?
2. What are your plans for this coming weekend?
3. What are some of your hobbies?
4. What is the first thing you do when you wake up?
5. What is the last thing you do before you go to sleep?
6. What was the last thing you ate?

### Roll 2

1. What is your favorite holiday? Why?
2. What is your favorite day of the week? Why?
3. If you could meet anyone in history, who would it be and why?
4. What do you like to do to relax?
5. Are you a glass-half-empty or a glass-half-full person?
6. What is your favorite memory from the summer?

### Roll 3

1. What is your favorite food?
2. What is one thing you miss about last year's classroom?
3. What is your favorite subject in school and why?
4. What is your least favorite subject in school and why?
5. What is the first thing you do after school?
6. What is your dream job?

### Roll 4

1. If you had \$10 million, what would you do with that money?
2. Do you believe in aliens? Why or why not?
3. If you could make only one phone call, whom would you call and why?
4. Would you rather be stranded on an island or lost in the woods?
5. Who is your favorite athlete, actor, or singer, and why?
6. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be? Why?

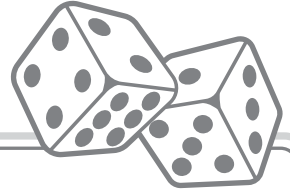
### Roll 5

1. What is your favorite thing to drink and why?
2. What is your favorite dessert and why?
3. What is your favorite meal of the day (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) and why?
4. Are there any foods that you dislike or will not eat? Why?
5. What is your favorite restaurant and why?
6. What is your favorite ice cream flavor and why?

### Roll 6

1. What is your favorite animal? Why?
2. What is your favorite movie of all time? Why?
3. If you could be any cartoon character, who would it be and why?
4. What is your favorite TV show? Why?
5. What is the last movie you saw? Did you like it? Why or why not?
6. What type of music do you like to listen to? Why?

## Conversation Dice Questions *(continued)*



### Roll 7

1. Who is someone you look up to? Why?
2. Where do you want to live when you grow up?
3. What scares you?
4. What is the best book you have ever read?
5. Do you like clowns? Why or why not?
6. What is your favorite room in your home? Why?

### Roll 8

1. What is your favorite color? Why?
2. Would you rather go scuba diving or skydiving? Why?
3. If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Why?
4. If you were stranded on a deserted island and you could have only one item with you, what would it be?
5. Do you have any item you think is lucky? What is the story behind it?
6. Do you prefer cats or dogs or neither? Why?

### Roll 9

1. What is your favorite season? Why?
2. Have you ever been scared to try something but did it anyway? What was it, and how did it go?
3. What is the best thing that happened to you during the past week?
4. What is the worst thing that happened to you during the past week?
5. If you could be a bird or a fish, which would you choose? Why?
6. If you could choose to play any musical instrument, what would it be? Why?