


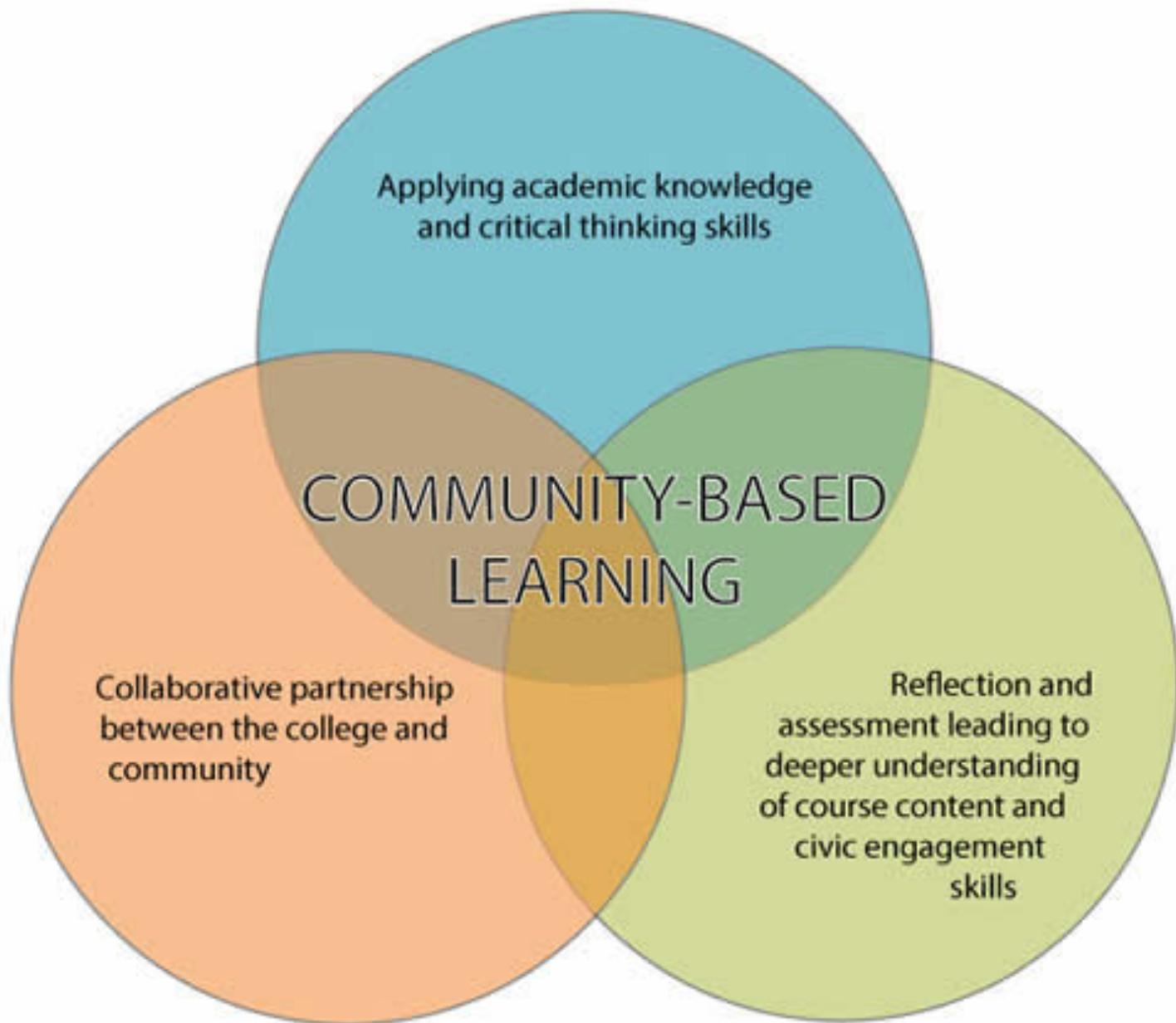
# SEEKING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: A PRAXIS-ORIENTED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING AND OFFENDER REENTRY

Stephen Barnard  
St. Lawrence University  
@socsavvy



# (Applied) Sociology and Community-Based Learning

- “Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it.” – Karl Marx, Theses on Feuerbach
- Shifting toward Applied Sociology and Community-Based Learning (CBL)
- ‘Service is Good’ (SIG) (Davis, 2006)
  - Good for whom?
- Emphasis on mutual benefit



Source: <https://www.pcc.edu/resources/community-based-learning/images/CBL-Vendiagram.jpg>


# Digital Projects as Praxis

- I cannot think of a better expression of praxis-oriented pedagogy than an education that emphasizes **doing what it seeks to teach**.
  - Course learning goal: “Think critically and reflexively about issues surrounding crime, justice, and community”
  - What better way to do that than to spend time out in the community talking about, and working on, those very issues?
- I see digital (hybrid) projects as a way to engage multiple audiences and sustain impact beyond the semester



# Crafting CBL Assessments

- Individual:
  - Community engagement
  - Reflective blogging
  - Experiential research
- Collaborative:
  - Group dialogue and discussion facilitation
  - Community improvement project
  - Oral and visual presentation
- A diverse yet sequenced set of assessments that approach community engagement from a variety of angles



# The First Step of Service: Conducting a Needs-assessment

- Getting your foot in the door
  - Every relationship starts with a conversation
  - Leverage your networks; get an introduction
  - Identify potential needs and leads
- Be honest about what you bring to the table, and what your goals are
- Be aware of the '(white) savior complex' and take steps to minimize it's effects

# Our CBL Project @ SLCCF

- Not your typical CBL placement/project
- We aim to assist with inmate rehabilitation and reentry
  - Short term: engage individuals; cultivate confidence and preparedness
  - Long term: curate resources; improve access; reduce recidivism



# Our CBL Project @ SLCCF

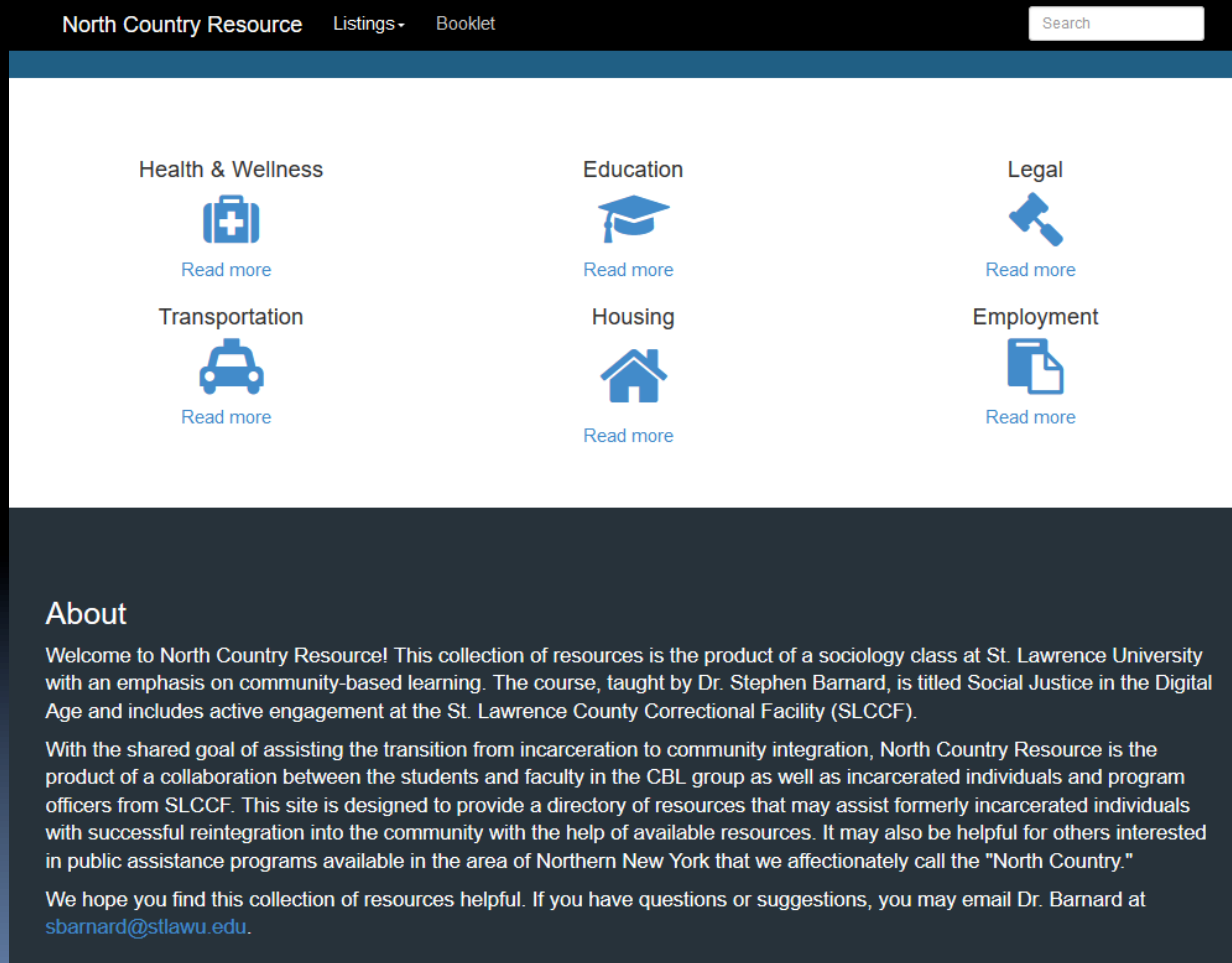
- Visits to the jail entailed:
  - Group discussions (large and small)
  - A variety of interactive and reflexive exercises
    - Life goals; challenges faced before/after release; keys to success; discussion of restorative justice, etc.
  - Two-way training for how to access resources





# The (not-so) finished product:

## NorthCountryResource.org



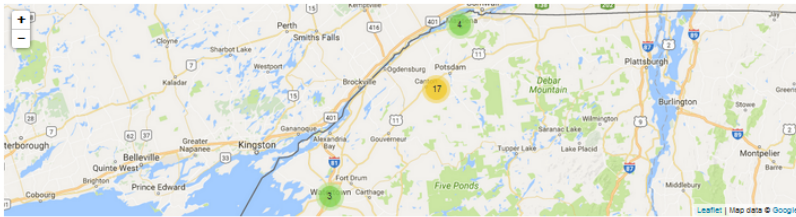
# Digest of Re-Entry Resources

North Country Resource Listings - Booklet

Search

## Health & Wellness

### Health & Wellness



### Alcoholics Anonymous Canton NY

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

**Address:**

17 Park St.  
Canton, NY 13617  
United States

**Focus:** [Health & Wellness](#) **Keywords:** AA, Drug Counseling

**Links:**

<http://www.aa-stlawrenceny.org/A-A--Meetings-by-day.php>

### American Red Cross

This North Country Chapter of the American Red Cross helps provide relief for disaster victims, health and safety training, support for members of the military and a safe and stable blood supply to people in the surrounding counties.

**Address:**

203 N. Hamilton Street  
Watertown, NY 13601  
United States

**Focus:** [Health & Wellness](#) **Keywords:** Disaster Relief, Life-saving Skills, Blood Supply, Health Services, Health

**Links:**

<http://www.redcross.org/local/ny/about-us/locations/north-country>

## Transitional Living Services of Northern New York

**Keywords:**

[Housing](#)  
[mental illness](#)

Offers housing and support to the mentally ill and homeless. Additional offices: Behavioral Health and Wellness Center: 7750 South state street, Lowville, NY 13367, Community Housing and Assistance Program (CHAAP): 110 Ogden Street, Ogdensburg, NY 13669

**Primary Services:**

Housing

**Phone Number:**

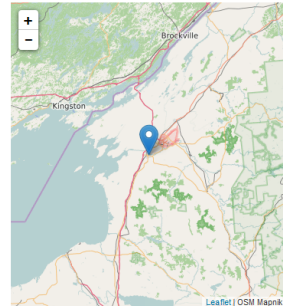
(315) 782-1777

**Address:**

Administrative Office: 482 Blackriver Parkway  
Watertown, NY 13601  
United States

**Links:** [http://www.tlsnny.com/homeless\\_housing.htm](http://www.tlsnny.com/homeless_housing.htm)

[Previous](#) [Next](#)



North Country Resource

[Back to Top](#)



# Who is served?

1. The members of our group
  - Faculty/staff; Students
  - Incarcerated individuals
2. The institution
  - Correctional officers and jail administrators
3. Our community
  - Better prepared to rejoin (and give back to) their community



# The results: Incarcerated participants

- Passionate and engaged
  - Honest reflection on their goals and challenges
  - Voluntary leadership (survey of their cell block)
- Prepared
  - More experience preparing for transition to life on the outside
- Human(ized)
  - Part of something positive
  - Know that people care

# The results: Student participants

- “This was one of the most valuable courses I have taken in my 3.5 years at SLU. Having the CBL component helped increase the learning and social value.”
- “The CBL was an awesome experience and has taught me more than I could have imagined. It gave me a greater feeling of self-worth, and I’m grateful for this opportunity.”
- “Learning about a topic and actually going into the community and reinforcing what I learned through experiences has been very transformative.”

# The Project Continues...

- Working with a new group
- Collaborating on version '2.0'
  - Community outreach and service updates
  - Re-entry guide
  - Feedback and rating system
  - Continuing support & resource network
- Participants planning to stay involved



**THANK YOU...**

**I look forward to comments  
and questions**