

**Sandra Allen | [sallen@colum.edu](mailto:sallen@colum.edu)**  
**Columbia College**  
**Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA**

### **Evidence of SoTL: The Service Community and the Student**

It is generally acknowledged that service learning, as a serious pedagogical approach, has a positive effect on the students' ability to apply what they have learned in the "real world." (Miller, 1994). In Public Relations Studies, we wanted to substantiate that the involvement of a community service provider in the evaluation phase was a critical component to the SoTL approach.

This interactive session is designed for faculty who believe service learning is a manifestation of curricular connections between the students and the real world. During the conference session, we will explore how to verify the nexus between scholarship and experiential learning. The discussion offers practical strategies for documenting student learning, and confirming the validity of an assessment approach through collaboration with a third-party service provider.

We will first present the Case Study: Evidence of SoTL: The Service Community and the Student. Thereafter, the session will be hands-on. Participants will identify their key goals for incorporating service learning into the curriculum based on three guiding questions

- (1) How does service learning join theory with experience and thought with action?
- (2) Does the approach enable students to see the significance of the academic subject to the real world?
- (3) How can the results be measured?

We will look at the pedagogy applied in the Case Study and the screen that was used to identify core knowledge. We will demonstrate how to develop a matrix to measure knowledge gained and assignment objectives met. We will examine three problem-solving approaches to learning activities developed collaboratively with the service provider. Finally, participants will explore the CSLA Approach<sup>2</sup>, a rubric for identifying community service organizations that provide a rich service opportunity.

Participants will leave with simple tools for fostering the collegial participation among students, faculty and community. Tools include a methodology for identifying objectives and follow-up strategies for continued student involvement after the conclusion of the semester's coursework. Those who attend this session also will leave with the CSLA Development Form<sup>2</sup>, and options for its use.