

TEACHING AMERICAN SPEECH

TEAM COLLABORATION AND EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IN SOCIOCULTURAL LINGUISTICS

MARY BUCHOLTZ, DOLORES INÉS CASILLAS, and JIN SOOK LEE,
University of California, Santa Barbara

Sociocultural linguists are strongly committed to bringing insights about language into schools and classrooms (e.g., Rickford and Rickford 1995; Smitherman 2000; Siegel 2006; Reaser and Wolfram 2007; Wolfram, Adger, and Christian 2007; Labov 2010; Charity Hudley and Mallinson 2011, 2014).¹ As linguists from various subfields have discussed, such efforts are most effective when rooted in meaningful partnerships with community members, an undertaking that involves significant logistical, political, and ethical issues (e.g., Leonard and Haynes 2010; Wolfram 2010; Purnell, Raimy, and Salmons 2013). Perhaps the most important of these issues is the need to set aside our own scholarly agendas in favor of identifying and serving community needs through sustained dialogue and shared decision making (Rickford 1997).

Drawing on insights of such work as well as our own ongoing experiences, we present in this article an example of an educational partnership in sociocultural linguistics that conceptualizes effective collaboration as both multidimensional and multidirectional in its impact and benefits. The program we discuss here, School Kids Investigating Language in Life and Society (SKILLS), is multidimensional in that it involves not only academic outreach, but also graduate, undergraduate, and teacher training as well as original research conducted by students in their local communities as well as university-based members of the SKILLS team; it is multidirectional in that these research, training, and learning activities are carried out by all SKILLS team members, ranging from the university faculty who direct the program, to the public school teachers and graduate students who implement it, to the undergraduates who provide assistance for it, to the public school students who learn and conduct research within the program. In this way, the SKILLS program positions all participants as both experts and learners (see also Lee and Bucholtz 2015).

As with other language-oriented programs introduced into classrooms (e.g., Egan-Robertson and Bloome 1998; Alim 2007), SKILLS guides young people through the process of carrying out original research and social activ-

ism projects on issues of language, culture, power, and identity in their lives and communities. In developing their projects, students build on their already significant abilities and knowledge regarding language and thereby become actively engaged in their own learning. The program's focus on language is therefore a means of fostering students' general academic and personal growth. The most immediate goal of SKILLS is to prepare young people for college, particularly those from linguistically minoritized backgrounds, by helping them recognize and leverage the potential academic, economic, and sociocultural advantages of the linguistic resources they bring to school. This effort contributes to the broader aim of the SKILLS program: to advance sociolinguistic justice, or "self-determination for linguistically subordinated individuals and groups in sociopolitical struggles over language" (Bucholtz et al. 2014, 145). The model of collaboration we offer here helps promote both goals by unsettling the boundaries between researchers and researched, teachers and learners, experts and novices, in the interest of enabling all program participants to gain a greater understanding of language in the lives of young people.

THE SKILLS PROGRAM. SKILLS is a collaboration among faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), public school teachers, K–12 students (most of them of high school age), and youth advocates throughout Santa Barbara County, with the support of school administrators, university outreach programs, and the local community college, Santa Barbara City College (SBCC). The core of the program is a flexible hands-on 20-week curriculum in sociocultural linguistics that is developed and team-taught in schools and youth programs by graduate student teaching fellows in linguistics and related fields, including Chicana and Chicano studies, education, and Spanish, in collaboration with a master teacher and with the assistance of undergraduates who are trained to act as mentors to the SKILLS students. The curriculum, the details of which change from year to year and from site to site to best accommodate the local needs of students and schools, guides participating students' research and encourages social activism on a range of issues related to language in their everyday lives, such as youth slang, code-switching, bilingualism, language brokering, family language policy, language maintenance and shift, language politics, linguistic racism, and the relationship between language and culture. In past years, students have produced a wide range of research and activist projects, including video ethnographies of linguistic and cultural practices in such settings as fire stations and skateboard parks; studies of bilingual language use in their families; and public awareness posters and videos challenging ideologies of language and race that personally affect them. Students also

collect and analyze audio examples of local slang in their communities, which they upload to an online slang dictionary on the SKILLS website. The website additionally provides complete curricula from previous years, including daily lesson plans and activities, as well as the results of students' projects and team research (<http://www.skills.ucsb.edu>).

SKILLS underwent initial small-scale pilot testing in 2010 and was first fully implemented in 2011. As it has developed, the program has taken different forms in different settings depending on the needs of its partners: as an after-school program in schools and community organizations, as a component of UCSB's summer and weekend Upward Bound program for first-generation college-bound high school students, as a stand-alone social studies elective class, and as a component of an existing college preparation program in local high schools. Participating students visit the UCSB campus at the beginning of the program for an orientation to college and to SKILLS and return at the end of the program to present the results of their work to faculty, students, their peers, and the local community at the SKILLS Day research conference. Thanks to an agreement with SBCC, some students are able to earn college credit in linguistics and anthropology that can be applied toward the general education requirement for the University of California system. The impact of SKILLS on students is measured through assessments of their class performance as well as surveys administered before and after the program, including comparisons with control groups whenever possible. In addition, evaluations of the program are provided by all team members each year.

In most versions of SKILLS, the graduate student teaching fellows take the lead in developing curricular materials in consultation with faculty mentors and the master teacher, who also provides pedagogical and classroom management expertise. At one partner site, in conjunction with UCSB Extension, the university's continuing education division, which provides low-cost professional development courses for K-12 educators, the master teacher was able to complete enough graduate coursework in linguistics under the first author's supervision to take sole responsibility for the course, with classroom assistance from the undergraduate mentors. However, most of our partner sites prefer to have graduate student teaching fellows centrally involved in the classroom.

SKILLS is designed to benefit not only K-12 students, but all program participants: the master teachers learn about linguistics as they collaboratively develop and implement the curriculum; the graduate students gain valuable teaching experience; and the undergraduates apply their education in a real-world setting. Meanwhile, schools and youth organizations gain teaching and mentoring power as well as innovative instruction and programming at little

or no cost, and family and community members benefit as both participants in and audiences for students' research, which strengthens their connections to youth and their own appreciation for and understanding of language variation and diversity. In addition, after the conclusion of the program each year, video data documenting program activities, as well as the data that the SKILLS students themselves have collected, analyzed, and publicly presented, are archived in UCSB's Center for California Languages and Cultures. These data serve as an invaluable resource for ongoing faculty, graduate student, and undergraduate research both on the SKILLS program and on language use in the local community (e.g., Bucholtz, forthcoming).

In the remainder of this article, we discuss our strategies and challenges in developing the SKILLS program as a collaborative educational partnership. These issues can be roughly divided into social considerations (partnership, teamwork, and relationships) and practical considerations (curricular development and implementation, funding, and project sustainability). Although every collaboration is necessarily different, much of what we have learned both from our mistakes and from our successes transcends the specificity of our context and program and can be applied to community partnerships across and beyond educational settings.

STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES FOR COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP. *Beginning a Partnership.* The central challenge in initiating an educational partnership is successfully creating a two-way bridge between academic perspectives and the needs of K–12 education. To achieve this goal, we draw on campus connections, attend to the needs and constraints of our educational partners, and practice inclusive project planning.

Although many partnerships stem from ongoing relationships between researchers and community members, in our case we began with an idea for a project and then sought community-based partners. Despite having gained familiarity with public schools, youth organizations, and educational programs in our area, we found campus liaisons invaluable in forging and strengthening community connections. Like many institutions, UCSB has offices and programs dedicated to community affairs, educational opportunity, and K–12 partnerships. Because our campus already has established relationships with many area public schools, administrators and staff have helped us identify appropriate potential partner schools for SKILLS and facilitated our introduction to school administrators, teachers, and students as the program continues to grow. Moreover, undergraduate and graduate students who often already have experience as volunteers in the community have been great assets in solidifying and expanding our community connections.

At a practical level, creating a strong partnership requires being well informed about how education works; therefore, gaining familiarity with existing structures and processes at the state, district, institutional, and classroom levels is critical to the success of collaborative projects. We have had to develop a deeper understanding of state and federal educational standards, graduation and college entrance requirements, policies and procedures for offering college-level course work in high schools, and the assessment of learning outcomes. In addition, we have immersed ourselves in the history, culture, and politics of local institutions and communities to avoid missteps and to align our work with local needs. Finally, we have learned to pay close attention to such logistically crucial matters as schools' academic and sports schedules, standardized testing, and special events, and we have established a system for meeting partner sites' security and health requirements for outside visitors, which for us has variously included fingerprinting, tuberculosis and drug testing, and obtaining school identification cards.

Regardless of whether the partnership originates in a long-standing relationship or a new connection, from the outset we have considered it vital to be as inclusive as possible in project planning. Although it may take more time to negotiate among diverse and sometimes conflicting viewpoints, ultimately the project will be of value to the community only if it emerges from the real needs of community members rather than being imposed from outside. We have seen that flexible and open-ended decision making at every step in the process is crucial in engaging participants and ensuring a meaningful impact. And for logistical reasons, we have learned that it is important to find a niche for the project that enhances rather than disrupts the institution's activities; for example, whenever possible we team up with established college-preparation courses or youth programs and provide additional support for their work, rather than duplicating or competing with existing efforts.

At the same time, we recognize that in a meaningful collaboration, our partners must also take into account that as academics we come to the project with our own goals and needs. In the case of SKILLS, this has meant making clear to partner sites, especially high schools, that our priority is to work primarily not with their highest-achieving and most-privileged students, who are already well-prepared for college, but rather with underserved students who are highly motivated or have high potential but lack the advantages of a family history of access to higher education. In Santa Barbara County, such students are typically first- and second-generation Latina and Latino immigrants from working-class backgrounds. Not coincidentally, it is this group that generally finds the most personal significance in the SKILLS program's curricular focus on language variation and diversity. In addition, because one central

goal of SKILLS is to conduct research on the effectiveness of the program, we work with the partner sites to ensure that informed consent is obtained from all participants (and their parents, when participants are minors) and that ethical standards of research are met by all members of the team.

Our experiences in negotiating the program format with our partner sites provide an illustration of the two-way process necessary in the earliest stages of forming an educational partnership. Given the constraints and needs of our five partner sites in 2014, we offered the program in five-day-a-week, three-day-a-week, two-day-a-week, weekly, and monthly versions. Although this variability led to scaling back the curriculum at some sites, all of our partners commit to the same time frame (roughly January through June), which enables us to efficiently coordinate team member training and other program activities. At the same time, it is critical that the schedules of our partners are given priority as much as possible, so that SKILLS can be smoothly integrated into each site's existing activities.

Forming an Effective Project Team. Given the limited time and resources of most public schools and community organizations, we need to take the lead in much of the on-the-ground development and implementation of our project. However, as faculty members who do not receive course release for our activities in SKILLS, we have limited time and resources. We have therefore set out to assemble and coordinate team members with complementary areas of expertise and to structure the program so that mentoring is multidirectional and decision making, communication, and leadership do not come solely or even primarily from the faculty directors.

For SKILLS, we form teams that represent a wide range of knowledge, including sociocultural linguistic concepts, methods, and findings; theories of race and racism, particularly but not only in the lives of Latinas and Latinos; educational theory, practice, assessment, and politics; methods of linguistic data collection, processing, management, and analysis; and occasionally technical SKILLS such as videography, photography, and website design. The faculty leadership is highly interdisciplinary, with primary affiliations in Chicana and Chicano studies, education, and linguistics. We have established an annual application and interview process to recruit a likewise interdisciplinary group of graduate student teaching fellows and site coordinators, who in turn select their own teams of undergraduates for mentoring, field research, and office intern positions. We recruit actively and widely, taking a broad view of what applicants can contribute to the program. For example, we have found that the most effective undergraduate mentors are not necessarily those with top grades, but often those who have themselves overcome significant obstacles in gaining access to higher education. We thus seek to

recruit a diverse group of graduate and undergraduate participants who can support the SKILLS students in different ways.

In response to the growth of our program as well as the great interest in participation among graduate and undergraduate students (and thanks to one-time funding from our university), our team in 2014 included the following personnel spread across five different sites:

1. 3 faculty codirectors, who oversaw graduate student activities;
2. 4 graduate student site coordinators, who also oversaw some undergraduate activities;
3. 7 graduate student teaching fellows at four of our partner sites, who also oversaw some undergraduate activities;
4. 13 graduate student participants in a year-long interdisciplinary research seminar on the SKILLS program (some of whom also contributed to the program in other ways);
5. 3 high school master teachers and 2 after-school program directors;
6. 13 undergraduate mentors, who worked directly with the SKILLS students;
7. 10 undergraduate field researchers, who documented SKILLS program activities via video and audio recordings as well as fieldnotes;
8. 10 undergraduate interns with the Center for California Languages and Cultures, who processed classroom video data as well as data collected by the SKILLS student researchers; and
9. nearly 100 K–12 public school students, mostly of high school age, in five municipalities in Santa Barbara County.

To take the fullest advantage of this range of expertise, SKILLS uses two complementary forms of training and mentoring: a “vertically integrated” model, whereby high school students are guided by undergraduates, who are guided by graduate students and master teachers, who are guided by university faculty; and a peer-based model, where team members learn from and provide support to those with similar roles in the program: (1) SKILLS students, (2) undergraduate team members, (3) graduate student teaching fellows, master teachers, and site coordinators, and (4) faculty directors. Importantly, however, as university faculty members, we strive not to simply claim roles as experts, and we encourage all participants to view themselves as well as one another as both experts and learners who gain valuable insights from our work together and especially from the SKILLS students.

We have seen that as the program expands, it is crucial to ensure clear and effective decision making and communication among members regarding day-to-day matters as well as the bigger picture. We recognize that a rigid hierarchical structure denies team members the agency to make decisions that are best suited to their situation and often delays time-sensitive decisions as they work their way up the “chain of command.” We have therefore

established a decentralized decision-making process with multiple communication channels, including face-to-face meetings, e-mail, phone calls, texting, social media, and file sharing websites. This arrangement involves only the relevant team members in the decision-making and communication processes that affect them.

The multidirectional learning and mentoring of SKILLS team members is evident in the way that ideas flow among team members. At weekly research meetings of faculty and graduate participants, for example, the graduate student coordinators of each site, who supervise the undergraduate interns, present brief video clips of key classroom moments that the interns have identified based on analytic codes collectively developed by the SKILLS team. The entire group not only contributes to data analysis of these clips, but also provides input and feedback to the graduate student teaching fellows as well as to the undergraduate field researchers who collected the data, thereby providing an active role for all participants in producing knowledge and improving the program.

Establishing Strong Relationships. As with any large, complex, and ambitious educational project like SKILLS, it can be all too easy to get caught up in a goal-driven, results-oriented approach and to overlook the importance of fostering strong relationships among participants. But if our work is to have a real impact, then relationships must come first. To develop meaningful connections both among the adult team members and between the adults and the youth with whom they work, we cultivate diverse viewpoints, create opportunities for unstructured social interaction, and engage participants emotionally as well as intellectually.

The SKILLS program builds in regular opportunities for all team members to offer their perspectives to ensure that everyone's viewpoint is fully heard, understood, and considered. Participants at all levels are asked to comment regularly on the team's process as well as our work together, and changes are continually made in response to these comments. We have discovered that to create a truly collaborative environment, more senior team members in particular (especially professors and SKILLS instructors!) may need to be encouraged not to jump in too quickly and not to dominate discussion so that others have room to speak. We have also found it valuable to provide opportunities for anonymous or confidential communication from all participants, so that sensitive matters can be raised and discussed without putting specific individuals on the spot. This climate of trust and openness provides a strong basis for productive ongoing dialogues about the team's goals, plans, expectations, and overall philosophy. Likewise, in the SKILLS classroom, openness to diverse points of view is absolutely crucial in examin-

ing highly political issues involving language. Not only is the importance of this goal explicitly addressed in class, but classroom activities such as formal debates and open-ended college-style discussions—which are often rare in K–12 settings—enable young people to explore complex ideas with less concern about being “wrong” or expressing an unpopular opinion.

Creating connections also requires getting to know one another at the social level. At team meetings, we reserve some time for informal socializing during snack breaks, which often generates important topics for our more formal discussion. Likewise, the adult team members, each of whom typically only visits their SKILLS site once or twice a week, seek to foster connections with students that go beyond the usual teacher-student relationship. One effective strategy we have used is to ask the SKILLS students to provide the SKILLS team with a tour of their school, neighborhood, or home town, with each student presenting in-situ information about locations of particular social significance to them. In addition to the social connections, this activity also feeds into the program by helping students to view their own everyday contexts as sites for multiple forms of linguistic and cultural practice. This activity and others in the program also strengthen connections between students. Unlike in college, public school students often come to the classroom with established peer relationships. In SKILLS, we emphasize small-group activities and discussions both within and across friendship groups in order to build on existing relationships while working to overcome social divisions between students.

Finally, the SKILLS program’s focus on social relationships also includes attention to the affective dimension of learning and research, a topic often ignored in traditional schooling and scholarship. We encourage all team members to reflect on their feelings about their work within SKILLS and to engage in teaching and research that is emotionally rewarding rather than doing what is expected or conventional. This approach not only strengthens the adult participants’ personal investment in SKILLS, but it also ensures that the program is personally engaging, eye-opening, and often fun for students. No matter how valuable a project is, if students perceive it as simply school-as-usual, they are less likely to be interested in what it has to offer. We have found it especially important to engage SKILLS students not just academically but personally, by tapping into what is most meaningful to them. This has meant, for example, that we have encouraged students to pursue project topics that on the surface may not directly relate to language; as the project develops, we guide them to make connections that help them enrich their understanding of the role of language in their lives. We have also worked to make SKILLS a space in which students and team members alike feel safe enough to share the emotional dimension of language in their lives, through

deeply personal discussions of linguistic racism, language and identity, and language in family life. In this way, SKILLS participants gain insight not only into language but into their own and others' experiences as well.

Developing and Implementing an Engaging Curriculum. Although it might seem that the development and dissemination of linguistic materials would be the logical starting point of a community-based educational project, this step can be taken only after a sound foundation has been laid in the form of strong team and partner relationships. This is especially important because of the complementary skills and knowledge that different participants bring to an educational partnership.

In developing curricula, we have found it most effective to take existing undergraduate classes as a general starting point and to adapt our materials and approach to specific student populations as well as to the interests and expertise of the master teacher and the graduate student teaching fellows. The master teachers, along with other team members with special expertise and experience in education, play a critical role in evaluating the curriculum to ensure that both individual lessons and overall pedagogical goals are appropriate. Educational research on effective pedagogies (e.g., Ladson-Billings 1995; Paris 2012) is also valuable when developing curricula.

Dialogue is emphasized at this stage as well. Because the graduate student teaching fellows and master teachers work as a team, they receive ideas and feedback from their fellow instructors as well as instructors at other sites; in addition, they receive input from faculty and from the undergraduate mentors on their team. Thus, materials are carefully screened from multiple vantage points before being implemented. Moreover, daily reports are submitted by each instructor and mentor, reflecting on the effectiveness of each lesson and suggesting revisions for future versions of the curriculum based on the students' response in the classroom.

We constantly strive to create a curriculum that is maximally inclusive of all students, regardless of their linguistic and ethnoracial background, their immigration generation, their socioeconomic class, their gender and sexuality, and other factors. For example, while some students may have access to smartphones and home computers, many do not. Because technology of this kind is used in some versions of the SKILLS program, we are committed to supplying all students with any needed equipment either through their school or community organization or through our own resources. Likewise, we avoid designing activities that assume that students live with their parents, that they are native speakers of English, or that they are bilingual. Especially in largely homogeneous classes, it is important to ensure that students from other backgrounds are able to connect to the material. For this reason, the

SKILLS program has a policy against practices that marginalize students, as can unwittingly happen when teachers rely on work-arounds or alternative projects for students without technological access or whose background does not conform to instructor expectations.

Finally, given the program's commitment to instructional flexibility, instructors are encouraged to constantly adjust their teaching based on students' interests and responses to ongoing material. For example, instructors may poll students about their favorite music or films so they can draw on these resources in later lessons. Likewise, particularly popular activities at one site—such as an activity in which students create a family tree representing their linguistic and geographic history—are often adapted for inclusion at other sites, so that all teams can benefit from one another's successes.

Securing Funding. Perhaps the greatest challenge of any collaboration is obtaining necessary funding. Even the most modest educational partnership requires some financial or in-kind resources, from the time invested by personnel to the basic teaching materials needed to implement the program. Since the SKILLS program encompasses research, training, and outreach, it has been most effective to seek funding from multiple sources in order to support different aspects of the project.

Given the ambitious scope of SKILLS, we found it crucial both financially and logistically to start with a small-scale proof-of-concept phase, which involved implementing one five-week unit of the curriculum in five existing social studies classes at a single high school. We were then able to make adjustments to the project early on, as well as to point to the program's initial success when applying for funding.

We began the funding process by applying broadly for small grants at our home institution, combining resources from multiple sponsors. Thanks to the strong undergraduate component of SKILLS, we have been able to tap into campus grants for undergraduate research and teaching, and because of the interdisciplinarity of the project, we have been able to apply to internal and external funding agencies in the humanities, the social sciences, and education. Conversations with administrators and staff both in UCSB's sponsored research office and the development office have also helped us to identify relevant sources of financial support. Additionally, graduate and undergraduate participants have played an essential role in securing campus grants available to UCSB students for community-based projects.

A particular challenge has been compensation for UCSB graduate and undergraduate students, which we are strongly committed to providing. Student support is consistently the most expensive line item in our budget and the most difficult to fund internally. We have been lucky to have dedicated

UCSB students on the SKILLS team who have been eager to participate out of a commitment to social justice and a desire to work with youth, even with extremely modest compensation. Graduate students are provided with stipends that vary in amount depending on available resources in a given year, as well as mileage reimbursement; in addition, they receive course credit and access to SKILLS data for their own research. Undergraduates receive course credit, mileage reimbursement, and small stipends when funds allow; some undergraduate students also draw on SKILLS data for senior theses or other research projects. And, of course, involvement in the program strengthens graduate and undergraduate students' academic and professional qualifications by providing opportunities for research, mentoring, and classroom teaching.

Planning for the Future. In order to have an impact, educational partnerships must be sustainable in the long term with regard to financial resources, personnel, and broader community support. Our own program has grown rapidly in a short time, with additional sites eager to participate. The challenge faced by SKILLS, like all such collaborations, is determining how much we can expand without sacrificing either the quality of the program or its adaptability to individual sites. We are primarily limited by the distance of partner sites from Santa Barbara and the number of graduate students we can recruit to participate each year. Although we had originally planned to make the SKILLS program self-sustaining at each site with only minor continuing support from our team, we have discovered that the greatest benefits for all participants come with close ongoing partnerships, and we hope to be able to maintain such relationships in the long term.

Fortunately, the flexibility of SKILLS is also its strength: when resources are restricted, we have been able to continue the program in a scaled-down version rather than ending it altogether. Up to now SKILLS has been primarily funded in a piecemeal fashion, which can lead to anxiety and a fragmenting of energies, but it has also enabled us to shape the program to meet participants' current needs rather than to fit the mission of a single large-scale funder. We continue to weigh the competing demands of funding versus flexibility.

Even more important to sustainability than funding, however, is a strong project team with an ongoing commitment to the collaboration. Community partners need to find ways to incorporate the project into their ordinary activities, structures, and processes, rather than treating it as a special, one-time opportunity, which will weaken any larger impact. Academic partners must be able to commit to long-term involvement in the project, which is most easily accomplished by integrating community engagement activities

with teaching, training, and research responsibilities, as we have been able to do to some extent. We have found that a core faculty leadership, with both shared and complementary responsibilities, is important to maintaining continuity and momentum while distributing workload. Ideally, we hope to ensure that the SKILLS program can continue regardless of the presence or absence of any particular individuals: shared control and plans for changes in leadership, whether temporary or permanent, will keep the participants and the project vibrant.

Another key component of keeping a project thriving over time is to promote it within the community as well as more broadly. In an educational partnership, the natural place to begin this process is with parents, teachers, and schools. For example, SKILLS personnel have attended school board meetings, Back to School Nights, and parent-teacher meetings. We have shared the results of SKILLS students' work with their peers, teachers, and parents, and we have created a promotional video about the program to play in public school classrooms. We also reach out to the wider community through our university's public relations office, and we invite the local press to public events such as SKILLS Day. Finally, through the SKILLS website, we are able to reach a worldwide audience of educators and researchers interested in establishing similar projects in their local communities. In these ways, we seek to communicate with past, present, and possible future partners and other interested individuals and groups about the considerable benefits that SKILLS has to offer.

CONCLUSION. In this article, we have discussed the lessons we have learned, and continue to learn, as collaborators in an educational partnership with public schools and youth organizations in our local area that works toward the goal of sociolinguistic justice. With SKILLS, we and our collaborators have created a program that places equal emphasis on research, teaching, and community engagement and that involves team members of all kinds—from public school students and teachers to graduate and undergraduate students to university faculty—in all of these activities, often simultaneously. In developing the SKILLS program, we have identified a range of issues crucial to the success of educational partnerships of this kind. Foremost among these are the social and interactional dimensions of partnership: finding the right partners, building a team, and promoting relationships. Also important are the practical and logistical issues of curriculum design and implementation, finding funding, and keeping the project going.

While scholarly discussions of educational partnerships often emphasize their contributions to communities beyond the academy, in our experience, the impact of such partnerships on the lives and work of university faculty

and students is no less profound. In our respective disciplines, we have been trained to work primarily on our own and to claim the authority of scholarly expertise. Thus, the SKILLS program has created new opportunities and identities not only for public school students and teachers, but also for UCSB undergraduate and graduate student participants as well as for us as faculty members. We regularly encounter the need to alter our familiar ways of thinking and talking, of teaching and researching, and above all of listening and learning, in order to make our partnerships as effective as possible and our own roles as valuable as they can be. Nevertheless, we continue to grapple with the challenges of being fully collaborative with all participants and of genuinely benefiting our community partners, both youth and adults. Throughout the process, we continually learn how we can do more and do it better.

As we have argued, the collaborative educational partnership created by the SKILLS program is not merely a one-way or even a two-way relationship, but a multidimensional, multidirectional network of activities and impacts. Yet, while the program works to accomplish a variety of goals and to benefit a wide range of participants, all of these undertakings are directed toward a common aim: to advance sociolinguistic and educational justice for youth who use marginalized linguistic varieties. Like other community engagement projects in sociocultural linguistics, then, the SKILLS program is most importantly a way for us to meet our fundamental ethical responsibilities as scholars committed to changing an unequal society.

NOTES

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1. We use the term SOCIOCULTURAL LINGUISTICS to refer to a broad interdisciplinary field that investigates issues related to language, culture, and society (Bucholtz and Hall 2008).

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MARY BUCHOLTZ is a professor in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the director of the Center for California Languages and Cultures; she is also affiliated with the Departments of Education, Feminist Studies, and Spanish and Portuguese. A specialist in sociocultural linguistics with a focus on language and identity, she is the author of *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). E-mail: bucholtz@linguistics.ucsb.edu.

DOLORES INÉS CASILLAS is an associate professor in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her book *Sounds of Belonging: U.S. Spanish-Language Radio and Public Advocacy* (New York University Press, 2014) examines how immigration politics throughout the twentieth century have shaped and transformed the character and growth of U.S. Spanish-language radio. She has published essays on radio humor, "accent" use within popular culture, immigration-based broadcasts, and the politics of language. E-mail: casillas@chicst.ucsb.edu.

JIN SOOK LEE (Stanford, Ph.D.) is professor of education at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her research focuses on the cultural, sociopolitical, and sociopsychological factors that shape the language learning experiences of immigrant children. She coedited *The Education of Language Minority Immigrants in the United States* (Multilingual Matters, 2009) and serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Multilingual Research*. She was recently awarded a Fulbright Senior Scholars Research Award in Applied Linguistics. E-mail: jslee@education.ucsb.edu.

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