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R.A.I.C.E.S. (Roots): A conceptual framework for community-building that connects linguistic and cultural wealth to support emergent bilinguals

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Abstract

Project R.A.I.C.E.S. (*Reaching All Individuals and Communities to Establish Success in Language Learning*) is a National Professional Development grant initiative operating at Stephen F. Austin State University. Grant objectives were designed to enhance school readiness, English acquisition, and literacy outcomes for emergent bilinguals (EBs), English learners (ELs), and multilingual learners (MLLs) through collaborative professional development events involving university, community, parent, and school district partnerships. The Spanish word *raíces* translates to *roots* in English, symbolizing the project's commitment to preserving and nurturing the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community by reframing language learning within an additive paradigm. Project R.A.I.C.E.S. creates paid professional development events to build a community of professors, preservice teachers, in-service teachers, parents and caregivers of emergent bilingual children, and children in collaborative professional development sessions called *academias* (academies). Each academia positions all participants, especially parents and

caregivers and their children, as key stakeholders and equal partners in the learning process to honor the community's cultural wealth, emphasizing linguistic and cultural sustainability for English language learners in educational settings. Moreover, the *academias* provide preservice and in-service teacher professional development and preparation for the TExES ESL certification exam, crucial for better meeting the needs of EBs/ELs/MLLs in rural schools.

1 | INTRODUCTION

This conceptual article explores the vision and implementation of Project R.A.I.C.E.S., a 5-year initiative funded by the United States Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), designed to enhance English language acquisition while preserving the cultural and linguistic heritage of participants.

In the fall of 2022, Project R.A.I.C.E.S., which stands for *Reaching All Individuals and Communities to Establish Success in Language Learning*, was awarded a total of $2,530,139 for a 5-year long grant by the United States Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). Though the grant's primary objective is to increase the number of in-service and preservice teachers highly trained in research-based best practice in emergent bilingual/ English learner/multilingual learner (EB/EL/MLL) teaching methods, the grant team is dedicated to honoring the cultural and linguistic heritage of the participants while also creating learning opportunities for English language acquisition. Project R.A.I.C.E.S. is aligned with OELA's emphasis on fostering opportunities for biliteracy or multiliteracy while maintaining heritage languages and culture.

In this article, the authors share the grant project, its vision and inspiration, and delve into the theoretical framework and operational practice of the grant. Since the project's inception, the grant team has been committed to culturally and linguistically sustaining theories and practices to foster English language acquisition by embedding our project's proposal in extensive community-building with local schools, families, community organizations, and the local university, Stephen F. Austin State University. Using an additive approach to language learning is crucial in environments that seek cultural and linguistic assimilation. In the United States, for example, schools have historically been places of language eradication and cultural suppression of marginalized communities (Spring, 2016). Therefore, it was important for the grant team to establish an additive approach to language learning because it honors and preserves the linguistic and cultural identities of learners, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. Additionally, it equips students with the skills to navigate and thrive in a multicultural society, ultimately enriching the broader community. We believe the deliberate integration of the project's extensive community-building initiatives with local schools, families, the university, and the surrounding communities is an important innovation to professional development within educational environments.

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND GRANT IMPLEMENTATION

Derived from the Spanish term *raíces* (signifying *roots*), this project intricately weaves theoretical frameworks that spotlight the profound interconnectedness of families, learning and growing, and language acquisition. The metaphor of roots served as a guiding force, intending to authentically engage diverse communities, with a specific emphasis on populations of Mexican/ Hispanic/Latiné heritage and their ways of knowing (Diaz, 2024). Therefore, beyond a mere title, R.A.I.C.E.S. embodies a commitment to preserving the cultural and linguistic diversity of the community while simultaneously fostering growth in language and literacy.

The theoretical frameworks that guided this project draw from socially just and critical ideologies promoting inclusive and culturally sustaining practices in language, ways of knowing, and culture. In the following sections we describe each one and how they were applied in the grant.

In our framework, we use the terms *emergent bilinguals* (EBs), *multilingual learners* (MLLs), and *English learners* (ELs) to describe students who are developing proficiency in English while also acquiring or maintaining proficiency in other languages. *Emergent bilingual* emphasizes a student's growing ability in both English and their home language(s) (García, 2009), while *multilingual learner* reflects the broader linguistic repertoire these students may possess beyond English (García & Kleifgen, 2018). *English learner* is a more traditional term that focuses on English acquisition, often used in policy and educational contexts (Hakuta, 2011). The lack of consensus on a single term arises from differing perspectives on how best to frame these students' linguistic abilities and educational needs: some prioritize the inclusion of multilingualism, while others emphasize English proficiency, reflecting broader debates about language education and identity (Menken & Kleyn, 2010; García, 2009; Kanno et al., 2024). Therefore, in our project, we use all three terms EB/MLL/EL to capture the nuanced and multifaceted linguistic identities of our students, acknowledging that each term highlights different aspects of their language learning experiences and supports our commitment to inclusivity in addressing their diverse educational needs and, in the words of Kanno et al. (2024), "structurally position them to succeed" (p. 10).

3 | LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND CULTURALLY SUSTAINING PRACTICE

Much like the biological function of plant roots, this project recognizes that prioritizing the link between culture and language anchors linguistic and cultural heritage, ensuring the vitality and continuity of both. Second language acquisition is most successful when the learning environment is safe and the student's culture is validated (Cummins, 1981a). The field of language acquisition has long supported theories that demonstrate how second language acquisition follows a process similar to first language acquisition (Canale & Swain, 1980; Cummins, 1981a; Krashen, 1982, 2005). Méndez et al.'s (2015) research findings indicated that culturally sustaining and bilingual instructional strategies resulted in significantly increased language acquisition for their participants.

Research findings have further emphasized the importance of culturally responsive teaching in creating inclusive environments that promote language development and academic success among diverse learners (Gay, 2018; Li, 2021; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023; Méndez et al., 2015; Paris & Alim, 2017). With this understanding, the grant

project activities were designed using best practices in language learning for EBs/ELs/MLLs, incorporating strategies that foster cultural inclusivity and linguistic affirmation. As Paris and Alim stated, "Fostering linguistic and cultural flexibility has become an educational imperative, as multilingualism and multiculturalism are increasing linked to access and power" (2014, p. 95).

As such, our philosophy of second language acquisition views a student holistically, thus entailing a culturally responsive (Gay, 2018), culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2014) component that is discussed in the following section but worth noting here. Culturally relevant and culturally responsive teaching centers a student's cultural background and ways of knowing which in turn anchors language (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally sustaining pedagogy, in the words of Paris and Alim (2014, p. 88), "seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism." Recognizing the research in language acquisition (Canale & Swain, 1980; Cummins, 1981a; Krashen, 1982, 2005; Pentón Herrera & McNair, 2021), the project ensures participants' culture and heritage language are maintained. Pentón Herrera and McNair stated about their culturally sustaining practices in their classrooms, "For many of my ELs, our circles are the only safe space they have to feel vulnerable and supported; our circles are a visual and emotional representation and reminder of the community they have at our school" (2021, p. 5). Our grant activities seek to mimic that place of safety and vulnerability through creating a learning environment for in-service and preservice teachers, parents and caregivers of EB/EL/MB, and teacher education faculty that combines linguistic flexibility and culturally sustaining professional development. Finally, as Pentón Herrera and McNair (2021, p. 9) stated, the results of creating environments such as this for them resulted in "opportunity to capitalize on students' strengths, build social capital across the school community, and acknowledge the critical role healthy relationships play in all aspects of student learning." It is our goal to potentially facilitate some of those same results through the strong foundation of *raices/roots* we are co-creating in the EB/EL/MB school community.

3.1 | Culturally sustaining practice

Grounded in the rich theoretical lenses of funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005), culturally relevant and sustaining practices recognize the importance of affirming and honoring students' cultural identities, languages, and lived experiences within the classroom context (Ladson-Billings, 2019). This pedagogical framework not only acknowledges the richness of cultural diversity but also aims to empower students by providing them with opportunities to see themselves reflected positively in the curriculum and instructional practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Culturally sustaining educational practice (CSEP) builds on culturally relevant pedagogy by emphasizing the importance of preserving and valuing students' cultural identities and linguistic diversity within educational settings (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014, 2017). While culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on incorporating students' cultural backgrounds to support academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1995), CSEP aims to sustain cultural pluralism as a key component of the educational experience (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014, 2017). Research indicates that CSEP can enhance student engagement and achievement by integrating cultural contexts into the curriculum and teaching practices (Au, 2014), and by leveraging students' home and community knowledge as valuable learning resources (Moll et al., 1992). However, challenges such as adapting curricula and providing adequate teacher training can impede implementation (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Despite these challenges, CSEP represents a progressive approach towards fostering equity and inclusivity in

education (García & Wei, 2014). Culturally sustaining practices affirm the importance of honoring students' cultural identities, languages, and lived experiences within the classroom context (Ladson-Billings, 2019). This pedagogical framework not only acknowledges the richness of cultural diversity but also aims to empower students by providing them with opportunities to see themselves reflected positively in the curriculum and instructional practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

According to Paris & Alim (2014), one goal of culturally sustaining practice is "to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as a part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and social change" (p. 88). In the Deep East Texas area, which is remote and rural, the EB/MLL/EL students in the two largest school districts (i.e., Lufkin ISD and Nacogdoches ISD, the grant's primary partner districts) exhibit unique educational needs and opportunities. The most recent data (2022–2023) of standardized state test exams (known as STAAR in Texas), shows differences in academic performance of EB/MLL/ELs compared to the state average within these districts. This information may point to the lack of structural support that is needed to ensure EB/MLL/EL students' academic needs are met. The data is summarized in Table 1.

As the data in the table indicates, the very low number of teachers certified and prepared to teach EB/MLL/EL in these districts could be a contributing factor to the students' lower pass rates on state standardized tests (López & Santibañez, 2018). A large body of literature indicates that EB/MLL/EL's achievement is maximized when their teachers are trained to meet their needs and when they receive specialized services (Kim & Morita-Mullaney, 2021; López & Santibañez, 2018). Additionally, research findings indicate that preservice and in-service teachers often hold deficit views of EB/MLL/EL students and families (Carley Rizzuto, 2017; Lucas et al., 2014), but that intervention and professional development can change those negative beliefs (Kim, 2021).

The structure and design of the grant activities includes shared programming and spaces between EB/MLL/ELs and their families with the in-service, preservice, and teacher education faculty participants. The professional development includes culturally sustaining instructional practices for the classroom and test preparation for the Texas ESL certification test, along with equal importance and time built into the PD to practice honoring and appreciating the culture within local Mexican/Hispanic/Latiné communities. In addition, grant staff spent a full year cultivating relationships with educational leaders and parents in local districts before beginning program implementation. Parents and caregivers of EB/MLL/ELs were invited to present to stakeholders, recruit participants, and lead community sessions at the *academias* with the support of translators. Recognizing both parents and teachers as holders of knowledge and co-learners

TABLE 1 Summary of the data from the partner school districts.

District	% of students who are EB/MLL/EL	% of Teachers who are certified in English as a Second Language	% of EB/MLL/EL third-grade students scoring below grade level on reading STAAR test	% of EB/MLL/EL fifth-grade students scoring below grade level on reading STAAR test	% of EB/MLL/EL ninth-grade students scoring below grade level on English 1 EOC
Nacogdoches ISD	29.6	4	47	25	42
Lufkin ISD	23.9	5.1	33	24	44

reaffirms the value of the community and cultural funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) and allows the program to push beyond mere participation and instead embrace shared leadership to support student success and build social capital (Pentón Herrera & McNair, 2021).

3.2 | Funds of knowledge

The research also confirms the importance of family involvement of EB/MLL/ELs as a path to sustained academic growth (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). The theoretical concept of funds of knowledge acknowledges and advocates for the weaving of "richly layered knowledge bases that inform everyday ways of being of students, families, and communities" (Gonzalez et al., 2005, p. 493). This framework highlights the idea that students and families bring valuable assets from their home environments that can be leveraged to support learning and educational success. The weaving of the families' and communities' funds of knowledge into the grant was accomplished through the viewpoint that these groups were equal stakeholders in the knowledge-building process. While the grant's objective is to increase the number of in-service and preservice teachers highly trained in research-based best practice in second language instruction, one of the best ways to cultivate community and understanding of the EB/MLL/EL demographic group is to include them as equals in the grant activities alongside the other stakeholder groups. This inclusion and focus on equity should help facilitate a paradigm shift among in-service and preservice teachers from viewing EB/MLL/EL as a population to be served to viewing EB/MLL/EL as a population to be learned from. Table 2 shows the alignment between the funds of knowledge approach and the design of the R.A.I.C.E.S. professional development events, called *academias*.

3.3 | Shared learning spaces: *Academias*

The grant team named the four annual, day-long, professional development sessions *academias* (academies), to reflect the collaborative learning environment created by the various groups. At the *academias*, participants are engaged in interactive and collaborative learning. Individual participants interact both within their groups and across different groups. Each year, the grant

**TABLE 2** Alignment of funds of knowledge and grant activities.

Funds of knowledge recommendations for PD	R.A.I.C.E.S. academias activities
Space, time and supportive networks for engaging with community knowledge	Four professional development days where EB/MLL/EL families are included as equal stakeholders, games and arts-based community building opportunities are provided, shared meals and interactions with bilingual service providers, community organizations and arts-based groups
Working through complexity	Specialized training with EB/MLL/EL curriculum and instruction professionals to learn research-based best practice for teaching EB/MLL/EL students; opportunity to take Texas ESL certification test
Putting their new understandings into action with communities and students	Opportunity for in-service teachers to apply for implementation grants to receive grant funding for supplies, resources, and curriculum to support EB/MLL/ELs in their classrooms

team recruits a cohort comprised of 25 in-service teachers, 25 preservice teachers, 25 parents and caregivers, 8 teacher educators, and a group of EB/MLL/ELs students from pre-K–fifth grade to participate in the *academias*, which take place on a local university campus. In-service teachers, preservice teachers, and teacher education faculty receive stipends to attend professional development opportunities to build cultural competence and instructional skills for teaching EB/MLL/ELs as well as stipends to compensate in-service and preservice teachers for taking the Texas ESL certification test. In keeping with the strengths-based approach of the grant, parents and caregivers of EB/MLL/ELs also receive stipends for participating in professional development alongside the teachers and faculty.

It is in this space that in-service and preservice teachers and teacher education faculty co-create a learning community together with parents and caregivers of EB/MLL/EL students. We believe that parents/guardians/caregivers are an integral and critical asset in the professional development of preservice and in-service teacher professional development. Figure 1 shows the interaction and cooperation among stakeholders and community members in a shared space and time, working toward common goals such as biliteracy, language acquisition, school readiness, educational equity, and cultural competence, based on the theories of funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014).

A key component of the grant goals is to have parents and caregivers in the same professional development spaces as the teachers, who will be in the classrooms with their children. All
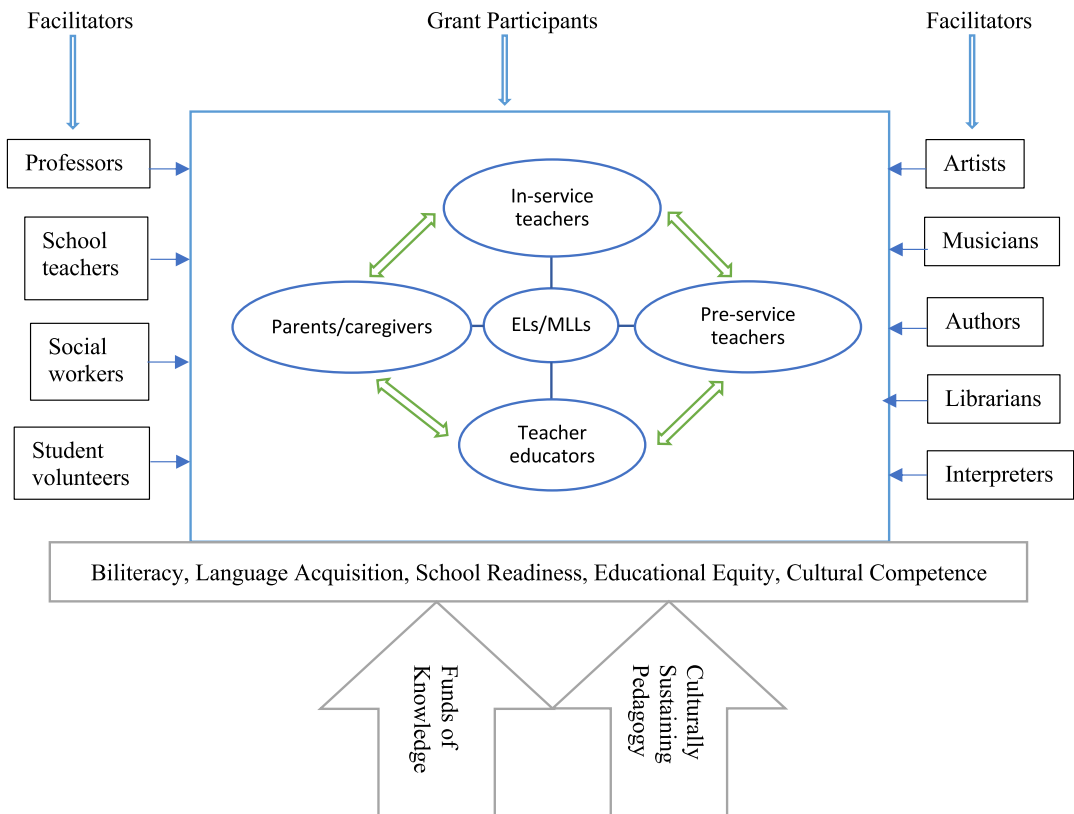
FIGURE 1 Connections and interactions among stakeholders and community members during the project R.A.I.C.E.S. academias.

participants are presented with practical language learning strategies for them to use at home, and they are sent home with any necessary resources such as books, manipulatives, and other educational materials.

Within the preservice and in-service teacher testing preparation sessions, the two different participant populations learn about research-based instructional best practices, language acquisition, and test preparation for the Texas ESL Certification Test. This session transcends the traditional techniques of teacher training and teacher education, provided both at the same time in a nontraditional and innovative setting, immersed in the culture, with the families of the EB/MLL/EL students they are teaching.

The *academias* enlist the support of local and regional artists, musicians, authors, interpreters, social workers, librarians, teachers, and community partners. In addition, college students from student organizations and from teacher preparation courses volunteer to assist teachers during these sessions. Lastly, students in our university's hospitality program are engaging in service-learning by helping grant staff plan for and facilitate the logistics of the *academias*, including a shared meal that includes all participants; in return, they are engaging in hands-on, real world event planning, which is valuable for their future careers. Classes for parents and caregivers allow them space and time to practice language learning strategies to try in their homes, and they are provided with aligned resources necessary to take with them.

A critical part of the *academias* is the incorporation of two languages—English and Spanish (the languages of the grant participants), both orally and in writing. The teachers who facilitate the sessions with the children are bilingual. The social workers who facilitate the whole group community-building sessions at each academia are bilingual. They conduct the session in both languages, sometimes starting with English and then translating into Spanish and sometimes starting in Spanish and translating into English. The grant website, all social media posts, and all print materials are in English and Spanish. Lastly, two bilingual undergraduate student workers are employed for the duration of each academia as on-the-spot interpreters for any participant who needs assistance. It is not the case at the R.A.I.C.E.S. *academias* that English is the primary language, with Spanish being supplied only if requested as is often the case at area school events and parent/caregiver meetings. Instead, both languages are used in all sessions that include parents/caregivers. Only the ESL test preparation sessions are conducted in English. In essence, the *academias* fully reflect the spirit of Project R.A.I.C.E.S., which stands for Reaching All Individuals and Communities to Establish Success in Language Learning.

As required by the grant request for proposals (RFP), the grant activities are aligned with the *What Works Clearinghouse English Learners Practice Guide* and the *Professional Learning Communities Facilitator's Guides* (Dimino et al., 2015). This guide informs the *academias'* curriculum across various professional learning community activities, including a community *kermés* (carnival-like event discussed later in the article), professional development workshops, training cohorts, and classroom instructional practices. *Academias* are scheduled to take place on four Saturdays annually. Each academia consists of six sessions, spanning 6 hours within a single Saturday. Some sessions are tailored for specific groups, such as in-service and preservice teachers, parents and caregivers, EB/MLL/EL students, while others are designed to combine different groups. All the sessions are designed based on the funds of knowledge from community members, including languages, culturally relevant books, games, music, fine arts, festivals, family stories, and food. Each session type is described and summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Summary of the academia sessions.

Session type and facilitators	Participant focus	Theory	Description
School community engagement session facilitated by social workers	All participants	Funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005); language acquisition (Cummings, 1981a; Alvear, 2019)	Focusing on language-rich bilingual team-building exercises that cross language barriers and allow participants to work together towards a common goal
ESL test preparation facilitated by multilingual professors of education	In-service and preservice teachers	Culturally responsive/sustaining pedagogy (Gay, 2018; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014)	Enhancing participants' language teaching skills and equipping them with strategies to obtain TExES ESL certification
Parent session and community session facilitated by book authors/teachers/community members	Parents of ESL/Bilingual Students	Funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014); language aquisition (Cummings, 1981b; Alvear, 2019)	Creating a joyful community atmosphere and highlighting the beauty and richness of the Mexican/Hispanic/Latiné culture and community within the Deep East Texas area. Also, there is a focus on easy-to-implement, home-based language and literacy activities and other helpful resources, connecting home and school/community
Children's sessions facilitated by certified bilingual teachers	ESL/bilingual children (pre-K–5)	Culturally responsive/sustaining pedagogy (Gay, 2018; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014); language aquisition (Cummings, 1981b; Alvear, 2019)	Focusing on promoting whole child development and aiding the language development of EL/MLL students. This is being achieved through the implementation of cross-language strategies and a culturally responsive approach

(Continues)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Session type and facilitators	Participant focus	Theory	Description
Kermés (facilitated by a variety of volunteers)	All participants	Funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014); language aquisition (Cummings, 1981a,b; Alvear, 2019)	The focus of the kermés is to integrate English acquisition and literacy in fun culturally relevant activities. These include local and regional bilingual artists, musicians, and authors that read and provide literacy strategies to promote language acquisition. The kermés also provides the teacher and faculty participants with an opportunity to gain appreciation for the community funds of knowledge on display and integrate these ideas into their teaching
School community engagement session	All participants	Social workers	Focusing on language-rich bilingual team-building exercises that cross language barriers and allow participants to work together toward a common goal
ESL test preparation	In-service and preservice teachers	Multilingual professors of education	Enhancing participants' language teaching skills and equipping them with strategies to obtain TExES ESL certification
Parent session and community session	Parents of ESL/bilingual students	Book authors/teachers/other community members	Creating a joyful community atmosphere and highlighting the beauty and richness of the Mexican/Hispanic/Latiné culture and community within the Deep East Texas area. Also, there is a focus on easy-to-implement, home-based language and literacy activities and other helpful resources, connecting home and school and community

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Session type and facilitators	Participant focus	Theory	Description
Children's sessions	ESL/bilingual children (pre-K–5)	Certified Bilingual teachers	Focusing on promoting whole child development and aiding the language development of EL/MLL students. This is being achieved through the implementation of cross-language strategies and a culturally responsive approach
Kermés	All participants	Variety of volunteers	The focus of the kermés is to integrate English acquisition and literacy in fun culturally relevant activities. These include local and regional bilingual artists, musicians, and authors that read and provide literacy strategies to promote language acquisition. The kermés also provides the teacher and faculty participants with an opportunity to gain appreciation for the community funds of knowledge on display and integrate these ideas into their teaching

3.4 | Summary of the academia sessions

At each academia, all participant groups come together during a midday shared meal time to engage in a *kermés*. A *kermés*, celebrated in Mexico and various U.S. communities, is a whole community carnival-type event which includes games, music, and food. The *kermés* facilitated at the *academias* focuses on play-based interactive activities for EB/MLL/ELs to explore language acquisition and cultures, enhancing early childhood literacy skills, and promoting school readiness. Moreover, the *kermés* serves as an engaging platform to showcase effective learning methods for other participants, including preservice and in-service teachers, parents, and teacher educators. During the *kermés*, local and regional bilingual artists, musicians, and authors read and perform in an effort to celebrate a sense of pride and trust in the culture of the parents and EB/MLL/ELs students and to provide the teacher and faculty participants with an opportunity to gain appreciation for the community funds of knowledge on display. The *kermés* activities in our project were thoughtfully designed, drawing inspiration from Mexican/Hispanic/Latiné family dynamics and culturally relevant picture books. Some examples of the *kermés* activities include traditional *loteria* (a lottery-type picture game), family-centered explorations of culture and identity through creating expressive self-portraits, name centered art-based letter/word activities, opportunities for children to make books celebrating their family, and crafting family culture bracelets. The *kermés* also provides opportunity for local resources and opportunities to be shared by local community leaders, social service organizations and educational experts.

4 | SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORK

The significance of the R.A.I.C.E.S. project is found in its comprehensive approach to advancing efforts for ELs/MLLs but also in the innovative design that includes parents and caregivers as equal participants in design and structure of professional development intended for preservice and in-service educators. The program's emphasis on professional development, particularly through its *academias*, offers a uniquely structured framework that goes beyond conventional methods. This framework enhances the capabilities of educators by integrating culturally sustaining practices that are directly responsive to the needs of diverse learners. The focus on educational equity, access to resources, and improved learning environments is pivotal in addressing critical gaps in support for underserved students, particularly in early learning programs. Furthermore, R.A.I.C.E.S. significantly contributes to the broader understanding of fostering multilingualism by recognizing the interconnectedness of language development across home, community, and school settings. Its holistic approach acknowledges the complex realities of EB/MLL/ELs, ensuring that language development is not isolated from cultural and familial contexts. This project is not just about providing resources; it's about creating a sustainable and inclusive learning environment that values the unique linguistic and cultural assets of every participant.

Within Texas, systemic barriers abound for our EB/MLL/EL students, like the low numbers of teachers who are certified to teach EB/MLL/EL students, lower scores on state standardized tests, and finally legislation such as Texas Senate Bill 4 (2023) which allows Texas police to arrest anyone they believe may have crossed the Texas-Mexico border illegally, including people on university campuses. The R.A.I.C.E.S. grant is dedicated to inclusivity and the protection of all community members' rights and safety and committed to building social capital of all participants. By

confronting these systemic barriers head-on, R.A.I.C.E.S. reaffirms its role as a refuge in fostering educational environments where every participant can thrive.

We are hopeful that educators, researchers, and administrators are able to build upon our innovative and inclusive professional development design. Our conceptual framework and resulting research can provide the foundation necessary for schools to rethink how professional development can shift its paradigm from training teachers to provide a service for a population, moving to the idea that an immersive professional development where parents are an equal partner is a powerful tool to create a strong community root system for student academic success.

In conclusion, R.A.I.C.E.S. creates an innovative dynamic space for professional development as community building among in-service teachers, preservice teachers, parents of EB/MLL/ELs, and teacher education faculty. Through this community, participants engage in and utilize culturally sustaining practices grounded in an additive approach to language learning. The multifaceted design of R.A.I.C.E.S., highlighted by its professional development initiatives like *academias* and *kerméses*, exemplifies its commitment to educational equity and excellence and a strong commitment to honoring the role and power within the parents and caregivers of EB/MLL/EL students in Texas.

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