FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS SUPPORT NETWORK (RAPLE): SPACE FOR SHARING, LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

REDE DE APOIO A PROFESSORES DE LÍNGUAS ESTRANGEIRAS (RAPLE): UM ESPAÇO DE COMPARTILHAMENTO, APRENDIZAGEM E COLABORAÇÃO

REDE DE APOIO AOS PROFESSORES DE LÍNGUAS ESTRANGEIRAS (RAPLE): UN ESPACIO DE INTERCAMBIO, APRENDIZAJE Y COLABORACIÓN

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ABSTRACT: In the field of Teaching/Learning Foreign Languages, the pedagogical potential of Digital Communication and Information Technologies (TDCIs) is notable. In this scenario, it is important to (re)think about teacher education, especially in the scope of this work, of foreign language teachers. Thus, this study aims to describe the Support Network for Foreign Language Teachers (RAPLE) as a space for teacher education, as well as for sharing inputs aimed at more innovative and meaningful classes. To this end, we rely on the concepts of Open Educational Resources, Open Education, and studies on teacher education and TDCIs. This is qualitative research, designed as a case study. The results show that RAPLE is relevant and provides support for the practice and training of teachers, as it provides freely and easily accessible resources.

KEYWORDS: Open Educational Resources. Repositories. Support Network for Foreign Language Teachers.

RESUMO: *No campo do Ensino-Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras, é notável o potencial pedagógico das Tecnologias Digitais de Comunicação e Informação (TDCIs). Nesse cenário, é importante (re)pensar a formação de professores, em especial no âmbito deste trabalho, de professores de línguas estrangeiras. Assim, este estudo objetiva descrever a Rede de Apoio aos Professores de Línguas Estrangeiras (RAPLE) como espaço de formação docente, bem como de compartilhamento de insumos voltados a aulas mais inovadoras e significativas. Para tanto, apoiamo-nos nos conceitos de Recursos Educacionais Abertos, Educação Aberta e em estudos sobre a Formação de professores e TDCIs. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, delineada como um estudo de caso. Os resultados evidenciam que a RAPLE é relevante e constitui subsídio para a prática e a formação de professores, na medida em que disponibiliza recursos de livre e fácil acesso.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Recursos Educacionais Abertos. Repositórios. Rede de Apoio aos Professores de Línguas Estrangeiras.*

RESUMEN: *En el ámbito de la Enseñanza/Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras, es destacable el potencial pedagógico de las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación Digital (TDCI). En este escenario, es importante (re)pensar la formación docente, especialmente en el ámbito de este trabajo, de profesores de lenguas extranjeras. Así, este estudio tiene como objetivo describir la Red de Apoyo a Profesores de Lenguas Extranjeras (RAPLE) como un espacio de formación docente, así como de intercambio de insumos orientados a clases más innovadoras y significativas. Para ello nos apoyamos en los conceptos de Recursos Educativos Abiertos, Educación Abierta y estudios sobre formación docente y TDCIs. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa, diseñada como un estudio de caso. Los resultados muestran que RAPLE es relevante y brinda apoyo para la práctica y formación de los docentes, ya que proporciona recursos de libre y fácil acceso.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Recursos Educativos Abiertos. Repositorios. Red de Apoyo al Profesorado de Lenguas Extranjeras.*

Introduction

Reflecting on cyberculture[3], often leads us to identify numerous advantages compared to earlier times when Digital Information and Communication Technologies (DICT) did not yet exist. Indeed, in various aspects of our lives, DICT has introduced significant conveniences: the ability to contact distant friends, conduct business with people abroad, and learn different languages and cultures, for example.

From an educational perspective, the importance of these technologies is recognized both by the Law of Guidelines and Bases (1996) and by the National Common Core Curriculum (2018), as evidenced in the following excerpts:

> **Article 32.** Compulsory elementary education, lasting nine years, free in public schools [...] aims to develop essential citizenship, through:
> [...] **II** - understanding the natural and social environment, the political system, **technology** [...] **IV** - understanding the **scientific-technological** foundations of productive processes, relating theory to practice, in the teaching of each subject [...][4] (Brasil, 1996, online, our emphasis, our translation).
>
> **General Competencies of Basic Education:**
> **1.** Value and utilize the historically constructed knowledge about the physical, social, cultural, and **digital** world to understand and explain reality, continue learning, and collaborate toward building a just, democratic, and inclusive society (Brasil, 2018, p. 9, our emphasis, our translation).

In the context of foreign language teaching and learning, access to people and content representative of target languages and cultures has become fast and extensive. In this scenario, Teletandem Brazil[5] is a consolidated example of an initiative that facilitated language learning through the use of digital resources quickly and free of charge.

On the other hand, the possibility of accessing numerous materials for the teaching and learning of a particular language can also pose problems. Among them, we point out the difficulty of selecting tools and inputs with assured pedagogical quality, which can be used without any demands for payments and/or private licenses. In this sense, one alternative is to search educational repositories (Leffa, 2006; Zanin, 2017), which offer Open Educational Resources (Baguma *et al.,* 2007; Leffa, 2016; Boll; Ramos; Real, 2018) and/or Learning Objects (Wiley, 2000).

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[3] The term is used in accordance with Lévy's perspective (1999).
[4] Article II refers to directives for Elementary Education, and Article IV to Secondary Education.
[5] Teletandem Brasil (http://www.teletandembrasil.org/) is a project that connects Brazilian university students interested in learning different languages with students from other parts of the world who are proficient in those target languages and wish to learn Portuguese, thereby establishing a learning partnership (Teletandem, 2023).

In Brazil, Currículo+[6] and Educopédia[7] are examples of such platforms. However, in the field of foreign language teaching and learning, there are still few initiatives of this kind, especially when dealing with projects specifically aimed at supporting teachers. Such reflections motivated the creation of the Network of Support for Foreign Language Teachers (RAPLE), a network repository designed to build a collaborative environment supporting LE teachers in the development of their classes.

From the perspective of the discussions presented, this paper aims to describe and analyze such a program, which was created to assist foreign language teachers in enhancing their practices and selecting educational content. To this end, we present in Section 2 the studies that theoretically grounded the proposal, and then describe the methodological procedures. Finally, we present the proposed analyses.

Theoretical Discussion

In this section, we present the theoretical framework that supports this research. For this purpose, we organize the section as follows: first, we discuss the concepts of Free Culture and Open Education (2.1) and then move on to the definitions of Open Educational Resources and Repositories (2.2).

Free Culture: Open Education and Free Software

Various studies advocate the benefits of teacher collaboration in teaching-learning contexts (Freire, 1987; Glat, 2018; Oliveira; Carvalho; Carrasqueira, 2020). Among them, it is asserted that an educational institution only reaches its full potential when teachers collaborate among themselves (Mesquita; Formosinho; Machado, 2012). Meanwhile, different studies have highlighted the importance of initial and continuing teacher training for the use of ICTs, such as those by Pereira, Filho, and Ávila (2022) and Araújo *et al.* (2023).

Appropriating these resources, however, often requires availability of time, pedagogical structures, financial resources, among others that, due to systemic issues, are not always

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[6] Available at: https://curriculomais.educacao.sp.gov.br/. Accessed in: 16 oct. 2023.
[7] Available at: http://www.educopedia.com.br/. Accessed in: 16 oct. 2023.

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available. In view of this, a possible way to facilitate access to ICTs and formative knowledge about them may be linked to what is called Free Culture (Furtado; Amiel, 2019; Freitas; Araújo; Heidemann, 2022).

According to Furtado and Amiel (2019, p. 6, our emphasis), Free Culture can be defined as:

> A worldview based on the freedom **to use, distribute, and modify cultural**, scientific, and **technological works and products**. The term "**open**" is part of movements that seek to reduce barriers to access and effective participation of everyone in various spheres of human action, including education, technology, and science. There is an appreciation for freely sharing, supported by the ideas that **nothing arises from nothing**, and that the best **proposals and solutions are created and improved in a collective and collaborative manner**.

Free Culture, therefore, is a movement in favor of the freedom of access and distribution of cultural, scientific, and technological materials. In this sense, it is understood that nothing is created initially but comes from previous constructions and that better solutions are collaboratively and collectively proposed.

Alongside the notion of Free Culture, or Open Culture, are Open Education and Free Software. The former designates something that is expected to be modified and redistributed without the demand for payments and/or licenses, while the latter does not necessarily require these (Furtado e Amiel, 2019).

Grounded in the discussions of the *Fórum sobre o Impacto do Curso Aberto para Instituições de Ensino Superior em Países em Desenvolvimento*, Furniel, Mendonça, and da Silva (2000, no page) explain Open Education (OE) as:

> A historical movement that today combines the tradition of sharing good ideas among educators with the digital culture based on collaboration and interactivity. It promotes the freedom to use, alter, combine, and redistribute educational resources using open technologies, prioritizing the use of free software and open formats. The concept also involves principles related to open pedagogical practices, with a focus on inclusion, accessibility, equity, and ubiquity [...].

Analogous to Free Culture, the theorists highlight OE as a movement geared towards sharing, teacher collaboration, and interactivity. Moreover, they emphasize the close relationship of this educational perspective with the freedom to use, alter, combine, and redistribute resources through free software and open formats.

Additionally, Furniel, Mendonça, and da Silva (2000) underscore OE as oriented towards practices of inclusion, accessibility, equity, and ubiquity. With the expansion of connectivity in the 21st century, the direction by these practices also turns to meeting the United Nations' 4th Sustainable Development Goal (Furtado; Amiel, 2019), Quality Education (ONU, 2023).

Furniel, Mendonça, and da Silva (2000, p. 6) further assert that Open Education (OE) primarily promotes the "removal of barriers to access to education." They contend that this can be achieved freely and legally through the provision of reusable content and free education for the public. This action triggers cultural movements to open up learning methods and practices, aiming for "the transition or removal of traditional roles such as teacher and student, moving towards roles like those of mentor and learner."

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are prominent in the field of open education and are significant examples of OE activities. According to McAuley et al. (2010, as cited in Almeida; Marques, 2015, p. 4), MOOCs are "online, free to enroll and open courses with a shared and public curriculum and with results available to all. Their main goal is to integrate social networks and make online resources available." In summary, they represent a democratizing form of education enabled by OE.

Configured as logical organizations that support computers or processing systems, Free Software differs from proprietary software by the ideology it represents: the encouragement of use, study, and (re)distribution (Hexsel, 2002). This "open" software is characterized by what Silveira (2003) summarizes as "the four freedoms," detailed by Furniel and Amiel (2019, p. 6) as:

> • Freedom to run the program for any purpose;
> • Freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs;
> • Freedom to redistribute copies of the software;
> • Freedom to distribute copies of your modified versions of the software.

Therefore, Free Software encompasses a set of actions exercised by various communities around these freedoms of use, study, and (re)distribution (Furniel and Amiel, 2019). According to Hexsel (2002, no page), freedom is indeed the most crucial characteristic of this software, as

> It is granted by the authors of the program and is effected through the distribution of the program's source code, which turns them into public goods,

> available for use by the entire community in whatever way is most convenient for each individual. The freedom to use, copy, modify, and redistribute free software provides it with a vast array of advantages over proprietary software.

Materialized through the distribution of source codes, the freedom to use transforms open software into public goods, freely usable and adaptable. In summary, in addition to democratic access, adaptations to the contexts that benefit from them are encouraged, thus enabling even more effective use compared to those from private initiatives.

Notably known in the field of free software, WordPress is an open-source virtual content management system. It is a program focused on accessibility, performance, security, and ease of use. Its organizers advocate for the democratization of content publishing and the freedoms that underpin the so-called open source (WordPress, 2023). This is also the content management system used by RAPLE as a repository of materials. We will discuss this topic in more detail later. That said, we now move on to the discussion about open educational resources and repositories, which are central terms in the scope of this study.

Open Educational Resources and Repositories

In the field of Open Education, an important concept is that of Open Educational Resources (OERs), defined by Butcher (2011, p. 5, our emphasis) as

> any educational resources (including curriculum maps, **course materials**, textbooks, **streaming videos**, multimedia applications, podcasts, and any other **materials that have been designed for use in teaching and learning**) that are **publicly available for use by educators and learners**, without any demand for royalties or license fees.

In line with OE, that is, aimed at democratization in the field of teaching and learning, OERs are resources available to teachers and students openly, without the need for obtaining licenses and without problems with copyright issues. These aids are classified as of various natures, such as course materials or educational videos.

According to Furniel, Mendonça, and Silva (p. 348, our emphasis, our translation), these materials may be "**lesson plans**, books, photos, games, and software, and can be present on platforms, software, mobile technology applications—smartphones and tablets, [...] articles, simulations, images, audios [...]."

Meanwhile, the 2012 Paris OER Declaration emphasizes their permissibility for use, adaptation, and redistribution by stating that they are

> [...] **teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation,** and redistribution by others with few or no restrictions (Unesco, 2012, p. 1 - our emphasis, our translation).

Another important perspective in the field of OERs is presented by Baguma *et al.* (2007, p. 1) in the *Declaração de Cidade do Cabo para Educação Aberta*, according to which:

> These resources include openly licensed **materials, lesson plans**, books, games, software, and **other teaching and learning support materials**. They **contribute to making education more accessible**, especially when funds for the acquisition of learning materials are scarce. They **also nurture the type of participatory culture of development, sharing, and cooperation that the rapid evolution of knowledge societies require** (*ibidem*, 2007, p. 1, our emphasis, our translation).

The expansion of discussions about Open Educational Resources (OERs) has propelled a mobilization for the freedom of access to different materials and a culture of cooperation. Given that Free Culture (Furtado, Amiel, 2019) and, consequently, Open Education (OE), promote partnerships as catalysts for more effective educational solutions, it is pertinent to recognize OERs as inputs of notable quality.

In addition to reaffirming the ideas already pointed out, Boll, Ramos, and Real (2018, p. 548 - our emphasis) define OERs as "**teaching and research techniques** supported by a medium, in the public domain or with an open license." In other words, these resources also materialize in educational and scientific techniques.

Leffa (2016), supported by Wiley (2007), refers to the "four Rs" characteristic of OERs: reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute. The emphasis on the four Rs highlights the alignment of OERs with the ideology of Free Culture and Open Education, demonstrating their educational potential amid practices such as collaboration and contextual adaptation.

Another fundamental concept in this study is Repositories, defined by the Brazilian Institute of Information in Science and Technology (2005 apud Murakami; Fausto, 2013) as "information systems that store, preserve, disseminate, and provide access to the intellectual production of communities," i.e., as virtual spaces that allocate OERs (Zanin, 2017).

In differentiating these spaces from other online environments, Heery and Anderson (2005) state that repositories have a specific architecture: content management, use of metadata, insertion, and search of materials. According to them, a repository should be "sustainable and reliable, well-supported and managed" (p. 1-2).

Leffa (2006) classifies repositories according to types of maintenance as (1) public: supported by governments; (2) university: maintained by higher education institutions; and (3) private: sustained by private organizations. Litto (2010, p. 88, our translation) emphasizes the educational nature of these spaces by stating that:

> A "repository" is a website that contains digital resources useful for formal or informal learning, featuring media such as texts, static images (maps, charts, drawings, or photographs), [...] (videos and films), and sound files. Some repositories are essentially institutional, supporting their own distance or face-to-face courses; others are multi-institutional, focusing on a specific area of human knowledge or educational material in a certain medium.

Thus, repositories are environments where there are "digital resources useful for learning" (ibid., p. 88) or OERs, as we have seen, and which support different types of courses, being multifunctional or focusing on a specific area of knowledge.

The *Currículo+* is an example of a public educational repository, as the São Paulo State Secretary of Education manages it. In this domain, it is possible to access and share materials of various disciplines and natures (digital lessons, activities, media, etc.), as well as download and/or save resources in collections. Moreover, reporting experiences and access reports from other teachers is possible.

Also, *Educopédia*, maintained by the City Secretary of Rio de Janeiro, is a project of a similar nature to *Currículo+*, as it provides support materials for teachers and students (training courses, lesson plans, games, among others) for all subjects, from Early Childhood to Adult Education. According to information available on the official website, the program offers easy and accessible options for integrating technology into the classroom, and materials are organized according to the academic calendar.

Lastly, the Portal do Professor is subsidized by the Ministry of Education and constitutes a digital environment where one can access and share lesson plan suggestions, engage with different teachers, and take courses. In the same space, it is also possible to download various media and access news related to the field of education. Most of the content on this portal can be accessed freely and at no cost.

Regarding governmental repositories, however, we highlight the investigation by Oliveira (2019), which focused on repositories for teaching Spanish. In her dissertation, the author points out a significant scarcity of content in the field of foreign language teaching and learning in these digital spaces. Furthermore, the researcher notes the repetition of materials across different repositories and a lack of adequate educational support. Supported by Leffa (2012), Beviláqua *et al.* (2017) state that ELO, Online Language Teaching, is simultaneously an authoring tool for teachers and a repository of activities related to language teaching. Through it, it is possible to produce, store, and distribute Open Educational Resources (ELO, 2023).

Leffa *et al.* (2018, p. 121, our translation) advocate for open access to resources, similar to those on the ELO platform, as well as their "responsive [...] to user initiatives" nature. In other words, the authors advocate for the need for materials to be customizable, depending on the needs of the individuals who use them. Such a perspective reinforces the importance of tailoring inputs to specific demands, a fact that aligns with the culture driven by Open Education, OERs, and repositories, as discussed in this document. Having presented the main concepts that supported this study, we will discuss the methodological procedures used in the next section.

Methodology

In this section, we present this study's nature, context, and data analysis procedures. Initially, we discuss the nature of the research and then contextualize the RAPLE. Finally, we will present the data analysis procedures.

Nature of the Research and Context

This investigation is part of qualitative research within the field of Applied Linguistics to Language Teaching and Learning, typifying as a Case Study (Paiva, 2019).

Drawing on Flick (2007), Paiva (2019, p. 13) defines qualitative research as that which "occurs in the real world with the purpose of understanding, describing, and [...] explaining social phenomena from within, in various ways." The author views case study research as a

type of inquiry that focuses on a specific case, which can consist of a system, "an individual or a set of individuals within a specific context" (*ibidem*, 2019, p. 65, our translation). Accordingly, RAPLE is the system to be analyzed.

RAPLE was established from an extension project developed under an extension program at a public university in the interior of São Paulo (Unesp). The project is linked to the Language and Teacher Development Center (CLDP) of the said institution, which is a program aimed at offering foreign languages to the internal and external community and enhancing the teaching practice of trainee foreign language teachers. It is a network of foreign language teachers, whose work begins with the launch of a virtual environment[8], designed for the insertion and availability of pedagogical resources. Moreover, over the years, its activities have expanded to include operations across different social networks and the conduct of educational events.

Both the website and the educational events and works on social media will constitute our object of investigation and will be presented in Section 4. However, first, we will clarify the data collection and analysis procedures.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

With the aim of analyzing and describing RAPLE as a program created to assist foreign language teachers in selecting educational content, as well as presenting data about its reach among teachers, data collection unfolds in the following stages:

1º - In the first stage, **a)** we conducted a meticulous review of the meeting minutes from the RAPLE team to develop a survey of the project's main activities, considering all the media involved. The documents analyzed span a period of 2 years (February 2021 - February 2023). Subsequently, to map the network, **b)** we accessed the project's official website and social media and noted the main information about them.

2º - In the second stage of data collection, we analyzed the access metrics to the website's content using the Google Analytics tool, regarding the website (such as number of accesses, location, etc.). For social media, we gathered data on the number of views, interactions,

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[8] Available at: https://raple.fclar.unesp.br/. Accessed in:19 oct. 2023.

followers, and subscribers. The results obtained from these two methodological stages will be presented in the next section.

RAPLE as a Proposal for Training and Collaboration

In this section, we will delve into the constituent elements of RAPLE, aiming to address the established objectives. We begin by describing the initial phases of the project and the current website (4.1), then we describe the actions implemented, while reflecting on the potential of each for the training, practice, and/or collaboration of/among teachers.

A Bit of History and About the RAPLE Website

The recognition of the scant presence of educational repositories aimed at supporting foreign language (LE) teachers in Brazil (Oliveira, 2019) was the driving force behind the creation of RAPLE. From its inception, the project has been coordinated by a professor from the Department of Modern Languages at UNESP/Araraquara. However, the program arose from a partnership between the professor and a webmaster, an expert in digital and educational media, who greatly assisted with specific multimedia knowledge.

Spurred by their mutual interest in open education and learning objects[9], a website was created on the open platform WordPress, where the first content was posted. Subsequently, the project also began to receive assistance from student scholars[10], who helped the creators manage this virtual space.

In 2021, two undergraduate students in Letters, one undergraduate, and one volunteer doctoral student, joined the team. In the same year, the network underwent visual and organizational updates. New lesson plans and projects began to be added to the virtual site of RAPLE, along with the standardization of those already available.

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[9] Throughout the development of RAPLE, the concept of Learning Objects (Wiley, 2000) gave way to that of Open Educational Resources (Baguma *et al.*, 2007), which is more aligned with the principles of Free Culture and Open Education.

[10] We would like to thank the PROGRAD (Dean of Undergraduate Studies) and the *Núcleo de Ensino* program for their support with the approval of the project and the provision of scholarships and grants for carrying out activities from 2019 to the present.

Currently, the project team consists of a faculty member from the Higher Education Institution, the project's coordinator and doctor, one doctoral student and webmaster, two doctoral students, one master's student, and 10 undergraduate students in Letters, including 2 scholarship holders and 8 volunteers. Through the work of these individuals, besides the repository (the website), the project also operates on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify.

As we mentioned, the RAPLE[11] website is a virtual educational space primarily directed at foreign language teachers. It allows free access to resources for teaching foreigners German, English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese. The site is maintained by the project team and external contributors, who are sent to the project's contact[12] email. Proper authorial credits are given for the content inserted. The proposal to receive suggestions from external users aligns with the concept of Open Education and participative culture, meaning sharing and "cooperation that the rapid evolution of knowledge societies needs" Baguma *et al.* (2007, p. 1, our translation).

This online space is subdivided into tabs: on the first level, different foreign languages are allocated, and on the second, lesson plans and projects are provided, as well as references to publications in the field of LE teaching and learning, suggestions for digital tools, music, movies, podcasts, dictionaries, and textbooks. These suggestions are pedagogically guided and always discussed by the project members prior to insertion on the website. With these, the aim is to offer teachers the freedoms described by Furniel and Amiel (2019), namely the freedom to use the contents as they wish, for any purpose, to modify them according to their objectives, and to distribute copies of their modified versions of the program.

It should be noted that not all foreign languages have tabs on the website. As these tabs are fed by users and team members, the languages that have greater participation from students and contributions from users have the most extensive collections. For example, there is an intention to provide pedagogical resources in the areas of Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) and Italian. However, we do not have support from teachers, students, and users who could contribute content in these areas. As a result, no materials of this nature are available yet.

Figures 1 and 2, which follow, present respectively a snapshot of the RAPLE website's homepage and one of the English area pages, the latter being representative of those for the other languages.

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[11] Cf. https://raple.fclar.unesp.br/.
[12] raple.fclar@unesp.br.

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Figure 1 – Homepage of the RAPLE Site

Source: RAPLE, 2023.

Figure 2 – English Area Tab on the RAPLE Website

Source: RAPLE, 2023.

It is worth noting that the three background images for the foreign language tabs were carefully selected to represent the linguistic diversity of each language. For English, one image from the USA, another from England, and one from Australia were chosen.

The RAPLE site is managed using WordPress, a tool used to develop and customize virtual pages, as previously discussed in the theoretical framework. Currently, in addition to presenting RAPLE and the tabs related to languages, the main page of the site also displays photos of the team members, links to social media, and a specific call to the lincoteca, inviting teachers to explore the dozens of digital tools, platforms, etc., that are recommended from a pedagogical perspective. Based on this information and the notions of repository presented, we organize Table 2, shown below.

Table 2 – Educational Repositories vs. RAPLE Site

REPOSITORY FEATURES	RAPLE SITE
Storage, preservation, provision, and dissemination of intellectual material;	X
Public, university, or private;	X
Content management, use of metadata, material search;	X
Provision of digital resources useful for teaching and learning;	X

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Based on the theoretical discussion presented, Table 1 demonstrates that the Network Support Site for Foreign Language Teachers can be considered an educational repository, according to the studies previously mentioned.

Firstly, the virtual environment in question is configured as a repository, in line with the understanding of the Brazilian Institute of Information and Technology (2005), because, as proposed by the entity, it involves the storage, preservation, provision, and dissemination of intellectual aids such as pedagogical suggestions, warm-up ideas, tutorials, and lesson plans.

Secondly, as an online space maintained under the aegis of a university and in partnership with a Center for Language and Teacher Development (CLDP), it fits into the university repository classification proposed by Leffa (2006). Thirdly, and in line with the perspective of Heery and Anderson (2005), and differentiating from other virtual environments, the site manages content, uses metadata, and inserts and makes materials available.
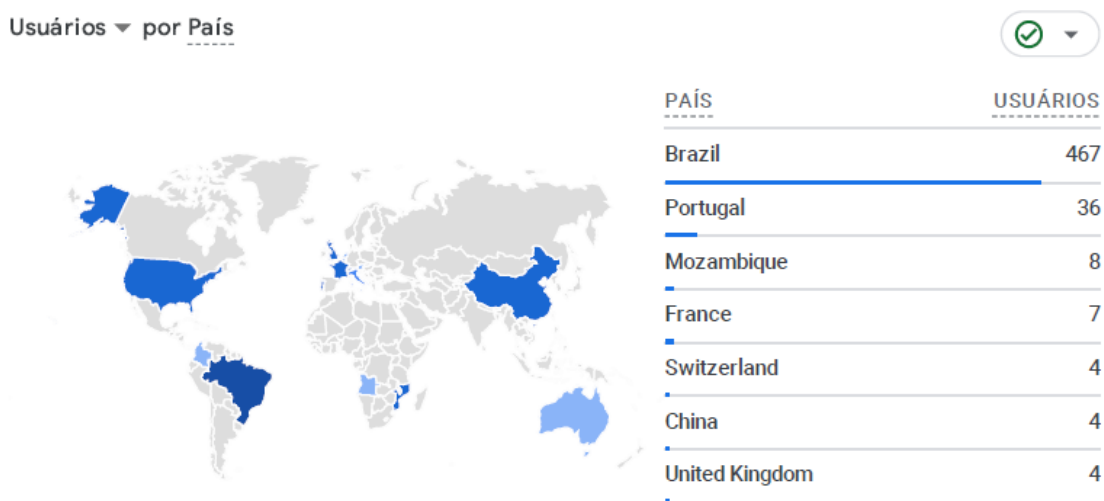
Content management occurs continuously through the curation of the materials housed. RAPLE encourages the use of innovative inputs that promote meaningful foreign language (FL)

lessons. Therefore, before being made available, materials received from collaborators and those produced by project members are analyzed for suitability. Following the analyses, the pedagogical inputs are made available in the space.

Fourthly, by providing digital resources aimed particularly at supporting foreign language teachers, the RAPLE site aligns with the perspective of providing digital resources useful for teaching and learning, as proposed by Litto (2010).

Thus, we reiterate that by using WordPress, an open content management space, for its support, the referred site corroborates its consideration as an educational repository, a space for the provision of Open Educational Resources (OERs). The data from Google Analytics over the last 30 days[13] concerning the preparation of this research showed that the RAPLE site was accessed 530 times from different continents, which can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Access to RAPLE from different continents

PAÍS	USUÁRIOS
Brazil	467
Portugal	36
Mozambique	8
France	7
Switzerland	4
China	4
United Kingdom	4

Source: Google Analytics, 2023.

13 These data were collected on November 13, 2023.

In addition to the clear evidence of broad national access to the RAPLE site, the data outlined above indicate that this online environment is also accessed internationally, a fact that aligns with the principles of democratizing quality education on a global level as postulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (ONU, 2023). In the following subsections, we will present a brief description of the contents available on the different tabs of the site.

Lesson Plans

The lesson plans (hereafter LPs) available on the RAPLE site generally follow an organizational standard. They are developed based on the model proposed by Rozenfeld and Viana (2019), which establishes and describes the different phases of the foreign language (FL) lesson. In light of these criteria and the theory of Butcher (2011), we argue that each LP constitutes an Open Educational Resource (OER).

From the perspective of the 4 Rs, the characteristics of the material, these LPs meet the specifications postulated by Leffa (2016), meaning they can be reused, revised, remixed, and redistributed. This categorization also aligns with those anticipated by the Cape Town Declaration (2007) and the Paris OER Declaration of 2012. An example of such material is the LP "Local Experiences"[14]. This is pedagogical material suitable for the proficiency level (B1), which includes communicative objectives (discussing local experiences) and linguistic goals (using the present perfect tense).

The aforementioned LP is available for use and reuse on the RAPLE site without the need for authorization, thus it is reusable. Similarly, it allows for revisions by the teacher without prerequisites. Considering that the original LP presents situations related to the city where the author operates, users who employ it in other cities might, for example, replace the locations indicated with those of their contexts.

It is maintained through WordPress and accessible to different operating systems (Linux, Windows, macOS, etc.) and browsers (Opera, Explorer, Google Chrome, etc.), demonstrating interoperability. Some suggestions provided in a given LP can also be remixed with other content a teacher may wish to use.

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[14] Available at: https://raple.fclar.unesp.br/ingles/experiencias-locais/. Accessed on: October 20, 2023.

Finally, since there are no quantitative, contextual, or format limitations on sharing this LP, it is redistributable. Different individuals and/or groups can, therefore, share the initial or modified version. Having detailed the lesson plans, we will describe the pedagogical suggestions in the next section.

Pedagogical Suggestions: The Lincoteca

The pedagogical suggestions for tools, music, and films provided on the RAPLE website, in the so-called "LINCOTECA," consist of comments about the pedagogical nature of certain materials. These, like the LPs, generally maintain a standard.

An example of such suggestions is related to Slido, a platform useful for facilitating classes. This pedagogical suggestion[15] includes a specification of the tool's features and its educational potential. Thus, such a resource can be considered an Open Educational Resource (OER), in line with the definition by Butcher (2011), considering it has characteristics aligned with the "4 Rs", as explained by Baguma *et al.* (2007), UNESCO (2012) and Leffa (2016).

Similarly to the LPs, the (re)use of the pedagogical comment about Slido is unlimitedly allowed. Since it accepts any modifications, it is evident as revisable. The explanation about Slido could, for example, be revised to focus on: the platform's visual design, the allowed number of users, and customization possibilities.

Like the materials analyzed previously, the indicated pedagogical suggestion is supported through WordPress and is accessible for different browsers and operating systems, thus, it is interoperable and can be remixed with other materials. Since it is also freely shareable, a given comment is also redistributable in nature. To facilitate the explanation of the spaces on the RAPLE website, in Table 1 below, we synthesize their organization and provide key information about them.

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[15] The referenced pedagogical indication is available at: https://raple.fclar.unesp.br/ingles/programas-e-ferramentas/. Accessed: February 20, 2023.

Chart 1 – Tabs on the RAPLE website

LANGUAGES **GERMAN, SPANISH, ENGLISH, FRENCH, PORTUGUESE FOR FOREIGNERS** **TABS**	OBJECTIVE
Tutorials;	The idea to create Tutorials arose during the pandemic when the use of technological resources in the classroom became mandatory as the only way to continue educational practices. Thus, the aim was to provide short, explanatory videos on some key tools for emergency remote teaching.
Publications;	The Publications tab features some of the works from the CLDP team at the focus higher education institution
Lesson Plans	The Lesson Plans space, organized according to the CEFR[16], proficiency levels, provides guidance for the development of systematically structured and meaningful lessons.
Film Library;	Films are suggested in the Film Library, with a brief description of their pedagogical potential
Music;	The Music tab lists songs that can be used in the classroom for specific pedagogical purposes
Lincoteca;	The Lincoteca highlights various resources for teachers that may be interesting for use in the classroom, considering the diversity of digital tools and websites available online
Warm-up Activities	The Warm-up Activities tab offers suggestions for starter activities at the beginning of the class. These interactions can also be used in the middle or at the end of the sessions, depending on the teacher's goal.
Dynamics	The Dynamics tab is the newest on the site and aims to provide ideas for games and activities that enable the active participation of students during classes.

Source: Developed by the authors.

It is important to highlight the "Dynamics" section, which is based on reflections about the importance of designing activities that involve active participation and agency of students, aligned with studies on Active Methodologies (Bacich; Moran, 2018). This section gathers various games and activities that enable the contextualized use of the target language and promote interaction among students. Finally, in the next section, we present a description of the other channels that are part of the proposal.

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[16] Common European Framework of Reference. More information available at: https://www.dge.mec.pt/quadro-europeu-comum-de-referencia-para-linguas.   ou   https://europa.eu/europass/pt/common-european-framework-reference-language-skills. Accessed in: Oct. 20, 2023.

Additional Communication Channels: RAPLE and Other Media

In addition to the website, RAPLE maintains profiles on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify. Counting followers and subscribers, there are over a thousand individuals connected. The alignment of information across different media aligns with the concept of media convergence, as described by Contreras-Espinosa (2018). The author argues that this phenomenon extends beyond a mere technological process; it is "a process of cultural transformation, in which new levels of user participation and new connections with content can be identified [...]" (*ibidem*, 2018, p. 130).

Due to space limitations, the subsequent subsections will address only some of RAPLE's actions on these social media platforms, specifically YouTube and Instagram. However, we aim to delve deeper into these discussions in future work.

Lives and Workshops: YouTube Channel

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of social distancing measures, RAPLE began a series of live streams and workshops with experts in the field of foreign language teaching and learning. These events were designed to contribute to the professional development of teachers in the field of foreign language education in general, as well as in the use of ICTs. Even after returning to face-to-face activities, these events have continued and have produced videos available on the project's YouTube channel[17].

These audiovisual contents are also standardized, as they are produced, broadcast, and made available in the same manner. They are shared either in full versions or in segments, commonly known as "clips". Subsequently, in Tables 3 and 4, we present data on all the live streams and workshops conducted by RAPLE available on the YouTube channel up to the time of this study.

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[17] RAPLE's YouTube channel is available at: https://www.youtube.com/@raple4886. Accessed: September 20, 2023.

Table 4 – Lives Conducted and Stored as Videos on the RAPLE Channel

TITLE	GUEST LECTURER/INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF VIEWS	DATE
Ensino e Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras: o que preciso saber?	Dr. Sandra Mari Kaneko *Unesp Araraquara*	644	March 18, 2021
Seguimos 2021 com o ensino remoto: experiências e dicas de professores	Me. Arthur Heredia *Colégio Visconde de Porto Seguro* Dr. Vivian de Moraes *Unesp Araraquara*	315	April 30, 2021
Materiais Ativos e Metodologias Didáticas	Dr. Patrícia de Oliveira Lucas *Universidade Federal do Piauí*	409	June 18, 2021
Cultura e interculturalidade(s) no ensino de línguas: nós (re)velados	Dr. Nelson Viana *Universidade Federal de São Carlos*	1078	August 27, 2021
Emoções de professores de línguas: o que sabemos?	Dr. Ana Maria Barcelos *Universidade Federal de Viçosa*	304	September 24, 2021
Multilinguismo e contato linguístico no Sul do Brasil: (Re)conhecer para ensinar melhor?	Ms. Rosane Werkhausen *Universidade Técnica de Munique*	203	October 29, 2021
Corazonar, sentipensar, sulear e esperançar em Língua Portuguesa Adicional e Materna	Dr. Henrique Rodrigues Leroy *Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais*	304	April 29, 2022
Letramento Crítico e Educação Linguística: reflexos na formação de professores	Dr. Sandra Regina Buttros Gattolin *Universidade Federal de São Carlos*	336	August 19, 2022
Ensino de línguas na contemporaneidade: revisitando conceitos de abordagens, métodos e técnicas	Dr. Rosângela Dantas de Oliveira *Universidade Federal de São Paulo*	367	October 27, 2022
Saímos do remoto emergencial, e agora? Um olhar retrospectivo e prospectivo para o ensino on-line	Dr. Valeska Souza *Universidade Federal de Uberlândia*	219	March 31, 2023
Cinema em sala de aula de Língua Estrangeira: Desafios e Possibilidades	Dr. Viviane Garcia *Instituto Federal de São Paulo (São Carlos)*	127	June 16, 2023

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Table 5 - Workshops Conducted and Stored as Videos on the RAPLE Channel

TITLE	GUEST LECTURER/INSTITUTION	NUMBER OF VIEWS	DATE
Seguimos 2021 com o ensino remoto:	Me. Arthur Heredia Colégio Visconde de Porto Seguro	315	April 30, 2021

experiências e dicas de professores	Dr. Vivian de Moraes *Unesp Araraquara*		
Ensino de línguas estrangeiras para a terceira idade	Me. Victor César de Oliveira Colégio Objetivo de Assis Dr. Vivian de Moraes *Unesp Araraquara*	235	April 30, 2021

Source: Compiled by the authors.

The video *"Por que aprender Línguas Estrangeiras"* [18], is a live session about foreign language teaching and learning. It presents scientific reasons for learning languages in a multilingual and globalized world. Therefore, we can consider it a pedagogical resource, aimed at teacher training, which, from the perspective of Butcher (2011), qualifies it as an Open Educational Resource (OER). Additionally, there is another video featuring a brief excerpt from the same live session, highlighting specific points.

From the project's standpoint, these materials embody the 4Rs of OERs (Baguma *et al.*, 2007; UNESCO, 2012; Leffa, 2016). RAPLE freely and indefinitely allows the reuse and modification of the considered video. This material could be used in numerous teacher and/or student training sessions, either in whole or in part.

However, this openness is specifically provided by the project, given that the contents of the RAPLE channel are configured as freely accessible. This specificity does not extend to all other videos available on YouTube channels, as emphasized by Furtoso and Amiel (2019), not all free material is an OER.

Thus, we highlight the possibility of remixing the video *"Porque aprender Línguas Estrangeiras?"* with other inputs in teacher training programs, making it redistributable as well.

Instagram Posts by RAPLE

As previously mentioned, RAPLE also engages with teachers through social networks like Instagram. The posts can be considered teaching resources as they provide pedagogical suggestions. For instance, the post about the movie *"La vie scolaire"*[19], available on RAPLE's Instagram account, is intended for French teachers and highlights the potential of an audiovisual

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[18] The video is available at: https://youtu.be/uolZvj3_xA8?si=Q5f-DhDnBLkRxPuE. Accessed in: 10/20/2023.
[19] Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CrLus5oO8oS/. Accessed in: 10/21/2023.

medium, aligning with Butcher's (2011) perspective on OERs. The presence of the 4Rs for defining an OER, as understood by Baguma *et al.* (2007), UNESCO (2012) and Leffa (2016), is also evident in the referenced material. RAPLE permits the reuse and modification of this material, thus classifying it as reusable and modifiable. Besides being reusable in multiple contexts, it can, for example, be edited to explore other potentialities of the discussed film. Being openly sharable, this post is demonstrably redistributable.

In summary, the videos from live sessions and a significant portion of the publications on Instagram and Facebook can be understood as Open Educational Resources (OERs) due to their alignment with the characteristics referenced (Baguma *et al.*, 2007; Butcher, 2011; UNESCO, 2012; Leffa, 2016) and their adherence to the principles of Free Culture (Furtado e Amiel, 2019).

It should be noted that all of RAPLE's social media pages have shown increasing adherence. During the writing of this work, the numbers in this area are as follows:

Table 6 - RAPLE's Numbers on Social Media

NETWORK/PLATFORM	NUMBER OF SUBSCRIBERS/FOLLOWERS
Facebook	599
Instagram	675
Youtube	412
TikTok	4
Spotify	17

Source: Authors' elaboration.

It is worth noting that the channels on Spotify and TikTok are quite recent, which could explain the low number of accesses observed. Having presented the constitution of RAPLE, the following are the concluding remarks of this study.

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Final considerations

As initially evidenced, the integration of Information and Communication Technologies into people's daily lives is a reality. With this in mind, it is urgent that more and more educators seek ways to rethink their practices to make them more engaging and meaningful.

In this context, Open Educational Resources play a significant role in creating better mediations. First, through the concern, foundation, and pedagogical collaboration that constitute them. Secondly, by the nature of free access, remixability, the possibility of modification, and sharing, which allows them to be used without financial investments, aligning with educational democratization and, consequently, the 4th Sustainable Development Goal of the UN, Quality Education.

From this perspective, the website of the Network of Support for Teachers can be considered an educational repository due to its specific characteristics as a storage location for OERs. Thus, in this work, we aim to highlight its potential to support Foreign Language Teachers in their initial and continuing education in a free and expedient manner. Therefore, we have demonstrated in this work that the lesson plans (PDAs), pedagogical suggestions, live video sessions, and Instagram publications can be considered OERs due to their specific characteristics, integrating into the RAPLE repository.

Finally, this study not only promotes an enhanced understanding of the activities carried out by the Network of Support for Foreign Language Teachers but also highlights the integration of this network into Free Culture. This is evidenced by the democratization of the teaching-learning process and the collaboration among teachers, thereby contributing to pedagogical formation involving the use of Digital Communication and Information Technologies (DCITs) in language teaching.

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