

# Cultivate multi literacy: reading reform and practice in Finland's National Literacy Strategy 2030

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**Abstract.** Against the dual backdrop of globalization and digitalization, the connotation of literacy has progressively expanded to encompass the use of digital media, the development of critical thinking, and the capacity for intercultural understanding. In response to a year-on-year decline in national literacy levels, Finland released the National Literacy Strategy 2030 in 2023, with the explicit objective of enhancing multiliteracy across the entire population. An analysis of Finland's keen insight into contemporary transformations and its proactive policy responses reveals distinctive strengths in four key areas: innovative conceptualization of multiliteracy, collaborative mechanisms involving society as a whole, sustained education and professional training for practitioners, and the equity and inclusiveness of resource allocation.

**Keywords:** multiliteracy, nationwide reading, Finland's National Literacy Strategy 2030

## 1. Introduction: the new connotations of literacy and global trends

With advances in science and technology and the continual evolution of media forms, the scope of literacy has been steadily expanding. It now encompasses not only traditional reading and writing skills, but also critical reading, the flexible comprehension of digital texts, and the ability to identify misinformation and extremist discourse [1]. Many international organizations have placed increasing emphasis on literacy. For example, UNESCO defines literacy as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute, and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts." Within the broader context of building a learning-oriented society, in October 2020 the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee issued the Opinions on Promoting Nationwide Reading, which set forth further requirements for advancing nationwide reading initiatives, emphasizing the need to "guide the public to enhance their interest in reading, cultivate reading habits, and improve reading competence" (Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, 2020). The Outline of the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through 2035, released in 2021, explicitly proposed to "further promote nationwide reading and build a book-loving China" [2]. In 2023, the Ministry of Education, together with seven other ministries and commissions, issued the Implementation Plan for the National Youth and Student Reading Initiative, aiming to implement the major policy directives on deepening nationwide reading activities articulated at the 20th National Congress of the CPC and in the aforementioned documents, and to further promote in-depth reading among young people and

students. The plan encourages students to engage in diversified reading—an integrated approach that combines multiple reading methods, contents, and formats—to achieve interdisciplinary, multidimensional, and multi-format deep reading, thereby cultivating observation skills, concentration, expressive ability, and critical thinking [3]. As these policy orientations have become clearer and more firmly established, nationwide reading has moved beyond a purely cultural activity to become an integral component of national cultural development strategy, closely linked to the enhancement of overall citizen quality and the advancement of social civilization.

Despite Finland's global reputation for outstanding educational performance, recent years have witnessed a decline in the reading skills and literacy levels of its population. In 2022, Finland ranked 14th in reading performance among all countries and economies participating in the PISA assessment, with an average reading score of 490—representing a decrease of 30 points compared with 2018 [4, 5]. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) likewise indicates a decline in the average reading scores of Finnish fourth-grade students, from 586 points in the third assessment in 2011 to 549 points in the fifth assessment in 2021 [6]. In response to these challenges and in alignment with global trends in educational reform, Finland, building upon existing initiatives, formulated its first national literacy strategy—the National Literacy Strategy 2030. The strategy aims to ensure that literacy is widely recognized across all sectors and to provide support for the development of literacy throughout the entire life course, encompassing early childhood education, primary and secondary education, general higher education, universities of applied sciences, and adult education. Its overarching objective is to strengthen multiliteracy and encourage reading [7].

Centered on the National Literacy Strategy 2030, this article synthesizes Finland's extensive practices and institutional policy frameworks in nationwide reading. It focuses on the distinctive features of Finland's nationwide reading reforms and development in the context of declining literacy rates, and summarizes its experiences in enhancing multidimensional literacy competencies, including reading ability, information literacy, intercultural communication skills, and critical thinking.

## **2. Background analysis of Finland's National Literacy Strategy 2030**

Since 1977, Finland has organized an annual "Reading Week" and released up-to-date information on literacy both domestically and globally. These initiatives provide guidance from government authorities and professional writers, offer age-appropriate reading materials, and accommodate the reading needs of groups affected by reading difficulties, illnesses, or disabilities, thereby fostering a nationwide reading environment [8]. In 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture established the National Literacy Forum, which drafted guidelines on cultivating children's literacy and reading interest. Over the past decade, more than 40 proposals, projects, and professional development programs have been launched to promote literacy and reading engagement [9]. Furthermore, UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action, released in Paris in 2015, specifically emphasized ensuring that, by 2030, youth and adults worldwide achieve functional literacy and numeracy at relevant and recognized levels. This framework became a key reference for the formulation of Finland's National Literacy Strategy 2030.

### **2.1. Foundational support: equitable and flexible educational mechanisms**

Within Finland's education system, students are afforded broad autonomy. They are not burdened with excessive homework, nor are they required to sit for standardized national final exams. Teacher selection, by contrast, is highly rigorous, which has earned Finnish educators significant respect in society. Although Finnish schools and teachers do not instruct specifically for exams or international assessments, their students

consistently achieve high performance in PISA tests, earning Finland a strong international reputation and making it a model for other countries [10].

In the education reforms of the 1990s, the Finnish government implemented a decentralization strategy and adopted a series of far-reaching policies that transformed a previously rigid national curriculum into a highly flexible and adaptive teaching model. The National Board of Education developed the national core curriculum and qualification guidelines, specifying objectives, content, and assessment criteria. The core curriculum is overseen by a tripartite training committee—including government representatives, experts, and education and training institutions—tasked with providing guidance on the planning and development of education, including vocational education and training. Similar to other countries, Finland experiences periodic leadership changes at the political level (e.g., presidents, administrative bodies), but these shifts do not alter the overall direction of national education policy. Broad consensus across political parties regarding the importance of education and training ensures that strategic policies and plans maintain continuity despite government transitions [11].

One of the fundamental principles of Finnish education is to guarantee that all individuals, regardless of racial background, age, economic status, or geographic location, have equal access to high-quality education and training. This commitment to equity is a core Finnish value, realized through the provision of free education at all levels, from early childhood to higher education. By ensuring access to quality educational resources across all stages, Finland enshrines equity as a practical reality rather than merely a guiding principle [12].

Building on a student-centered learning environment, a highly qualified teaching workforce, and stable yet flexible education policies, the Finnish government takes a comprehensive approach to meet the needs of learners across all age groups. Policies are designed both to respond to contemporary developments and to accommodate individual student needs. This human-centered approach is reflected in the National Literacy Strategy 2030, which aims to enhance literacy across the entire population. Through a series of innovative teaching methods and assessment mechanisms, the strategy seeks to stimulate learners' interest and creativity, thereby reinforcing Finland's leading position in global education.

## 2.2. Development opportunities: media transformation and challenges in a digital environment

The Finnish Reading Center (Lukukeskus) has been a pioneering institution in the development of reading and literacy in Finland, serving as a driving force behind the nationwide reading initiative. As an innovative, diverse, and internationally oriented expert and influencer in literacy promotion, the Reading Center aims to provide all individuals with a "reading lifestyle." By engaging in and promoting societal discussions on literacy and reading, and by monitoring changes in education and library sectors, the Center responds quickly and flexibly to emerging trends. It is widely recognized in Finland as a trusted partner and source of information. In recent years, under the leadership of the Reading Center, Finnish reading and literary activities have continuously adapted to the evolving media landscape, guiding and advancing nationwide reading reforms.

Firstly, in terms of content and format, literature is increasingly digital. As everyday life becomes more digitized, individuals encounter an ever-growing volume of fragmented and diverse texts, leading them to prefer portable and easily accessible e-books or audiobooks. Beyond conventional e-books, many services now offer digital audiobooks that allow readers to simultaneously view and listen to texts. This development has positively supported multilingual reading and enriched reading experiences for children. However, it also presents new challenges; integrating books and materials published exclusively in digital formats into library collections remains a significant issue in Finland [13]. Statistics from the Reading Center's website on annual

bestsellers show that children's audiobooks have topped the charts for two consecutive years, with Swedish author Karl-Johan Forssén Ehrlin's *The Rabbit Who Wants to Fall Asleep* leading sales since 2021. The potential replacement of traditional bedtime storytelling with e-books has sparked public concern about the future of children's literature and reading in the digital era [14].

Changes in reading formats, leisure habits, media fragmentation, and the influence of new technologies on media use are also reflected in reading practices. The widespread adoption of smartphones, rapid feedback on social media, and addictive algorithmic logic challenge people's ability to engage in sustained reading. While new literary formats, audiobooks, and e-books lower the barriers to literary consumption and integrate books more seamlessly into daily life, ample evidence suggests that concerns about declining reading time and the reduced prominence of literary reading in the digital age are well-founded. Studies on the allocation of leisure time among Finns reveal that the amount of time devoted to reading has decreased significantly [12], with changes in the media environment being a major contributing factor.

Shifts in social structure demand increasingly fluent literacy and a broader set of foundational skills. Critical literacy, digital adaptability, and communication skills have become prerequisites for daily life and social participation. In practical terms, the evolution of reading formats has expanded the demands of learning and literacy: diverse forms such as game texts, social media content, and online documents and forms require readers to possess literacy skills and competencies aligned with the rapidly changing media environment.

### 2.3. Core elements: responding to the demand for multiliteracy competence

UNESCO defines "literacy" as more than a one-time action; it transcends the traditional conception of a set of reading, writing, and numeracy skills. Literacy is now understood as the means to identify, understand, interpret, create, and communicate in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich, and rapidly changing world. Literacy is a continuous process of lifelong learning and mastery of reading, writing, and digital usage, forming part of a broader set of skills that includes digital competence, media literacy, education for sustainable development, global citizenship, and specific vocational abilities. As individuals increasingly access information and learning through digital technologies, literacy skills themselves continue to expand and evolve [14]. Multiliteracy is a central focus of Finland's National Literacy Strategy 2030. The concept of literacy continues to develop in response to changing societal and individual needs. Beyond foundational reading and writing skills, it encompasses visual literacy, critical literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, financial literacy, and health literacy. Learners actively engage in communication and problem-solving by continually challenging themselves and exploring new types of texts.

By international standards, Finland has historically been a leader in literacy. However, the decline in national literacy rates in the 21st century has raised concerns within the Finnish government about future literacy levels. The primary aim of the National Literacy Strategy 2030 is to identify effective measures to strengthen literacy among children, youth, and adults with weak reading skills, addressing new demands for multiliteracy in the context of globalization, digitalization, and population aging. The strategy details specific actions Finland will take to enhance literacy across the population. Finland's robust social foundations in education, research, and culture support knowledge acquisition based on literacy and its continuous development, ensuring that every child, adolescent, and adult has the right to acquire and strengthen diverse literacy skills. Presently, significant disparities in reading abilities during primary and lower secondary education have led to a rising proportion of young people with weaker literacy skills. In response, Finland must implement targeted measures at national, regional, and local levels to reverse this trend.

The increasing demands for multimodal text literacy are not unique to Finland; they reflect a broader global trend in educational development. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD) places "interactive use of language, symbols, and texts" at the top of its nine core competencies, highlighting its central role in modern education systems. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) also includes reading literacy as a core test domain, underscoring its critical importance for student learning and development. Additionally, UNESCO's 2012 Global Education Monitoring Report emphasizes that literacy and numeracy are essential skills every young person should master, reinforcing the foundational importance of reading literacy. Other countries have similarly recognized the centrality of literacy. In December 2019, the Slovenian government adopted the National Strategy for the Development of Reading Literacy for the period of 2019–2030, which underscores that reading literacy forms the foundation of literacy development and that a reading culture is integral to enhancing reading abilities. The strategy envisions providing every individual with the necessary literacy skills to develop their capacity for a fulfilling personal and professional life [15]. In 2023, the Irish Department of Education released the Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024–2033, covering learners from early learning and childcare through to post-primary education. This strategy aims to promote fundamental literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, alongside personal development, enabling learners to navigate the evolving digital world successfully [16].

### **3. Core content and implementation path of Finland's National Literacy Strategy 2030**

The National Literacy Strategy 2030 aims to establish Finland as the country with the most diverse literacy culture in the world by 2030 through long-term and systematic efforts at national, regional, and local levels. The strategy promotes and strengthens a nationwide reading culture through specific actions in three main areas: cooperation between national and municipal authorities, planning of teacher instruction, and fostering a societal reading atmosphere.

#### **3.1. Framework and objectives: ensuring the right to literacy for all**

Driven by the Education and Culture Committee of the Finnish Parliament, work on formulating the National Literacy Strategy 2030 began in the autumn of 2020. The strategy provides long-term support for literacy development through a series of coordinated strategies and programs. Through sustained collaboration across national, regional, and local levels, literacy across all age groups has been significantly enhanced. Nationwide reading activities, led by the Finnish Reading Center, have flourished, fostering both a positive attitude toward reading and a deeper recognition of the importance of literacy. The strategy details efforts to improve literacy among children and adolescents while also creating new opportunities for adult and elderly literacy development.

The National Literacy Strategy 2030 further expands on the guiding principles established by the National Literacy Forum, jointly founded by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2018. The strategy outlines concrete objectives and measures for enhancing diverse literacy skills across all age groups. To achieve these objectives, Finland must jointly develop measures and support services at both national and local levels, while also developing sufficient assessment tools to evaluate literacy skills and the effectiveness of literacy initiatives. The central goal is to build a robust, diverse, and inclusive reading culture that consolidates Finland's achievements and ensures citizens' access to a high quality of life.

By 2030, the strategy identifies three practical objectives: (1) ensuring the structural sustainability of literacy development efforts, (2) strengthening the cultivation of multiliteracy competence, and (3) encouraging reading and diversification of literacy practices. First, ensuring structural sustainability is pursued

at multiple levels: at the macro level, through strengthened legislation and increased local government decision-making; at the meso level, by organizing institutional participation across all age ranges, from early childhood to upper secondary education; and at the micro level, by supporting ongoing media coverage and scientific research related to literacy. Second, strengthening multiliteracy competence includes professional training and the creation of supportive technical environments. The strategy specifies measures to enhance multicultural competence among different professional groups and provides tools, services, and materials—such as improved curricula—to support the use of information technology and communication skills across educational stages. Third, encouraging reading and the diversification of literacy requires society-wide efforts to create opportunities for reading and engaging with multiple literacies. The strategy promotes reading among individuals of different identities, ages, and native languages in diverse settings and through diverse content. To achieve these goals, the strategy emphasizes measures to develop literacy among linguistic minorities, ethnic groups, and individuals requiring special support. To further support literacy initiatives and promote reading, diversified research in the literacy field is encouraged. All educational measures are designed to build the foundational skills necessary for social practice, learning, and lifelong competence in multiliteracy. The ultimate aim is to enable individuals to navigate daily life, learning, and work more effectively through multiliteracy. Moreover, a multicultural approach fosters personal development, provides access to culture, arts, and literature, and offers experiences that promote social cohesion.

### 3.2. Collaboration and sustainability: safeguarding measures for national and local cooperation

#### 3.2.1. Framework requirements in the strategy

The National Literacy Strategy 2030, as a national-level coordinating policy document, places particular emphasis on establishing a vertically integrated system connecting national and local levels. As illustrated in Table 1, the strategy ensures that legislation and other official guidelines support literacy development efforts at national, regional, and local levels. Finland also prepares national indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of literacy initiatives, providing data on the needs and implementation status of literacy activities across regions, such as surveys and literacy development assessments.

**Table 1.** Responsibilities of national authorities, organizations, and institutions under the strategy

		Implement systematic and long-term management and coordination at both the national and local levels. Conduct surveys of national, regional, and local stakeholders to identify key focus areas and measures for promoting literacy development.
National Level	Ensure that legislation and other mandatory guidelines support literacy development work at national, regional, and local levels.	Develop national indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of literacy development initiatives, such as literacy rate metrics.
	Organize national and local reading activities to attract readers across different age groups.	Integrate multiple measures to support families from early childhood, such as collaboration between libraries and family centers to promote family reading activities.
	Disseminate information on shared reading practices for adults and children, enhancing early literacy at home by familiarizing caregivers with diverse literacy skills.	Cooperate with children's welfare clinic libraries, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centers, and basic education institutions to support family shared-reading programs.
Organizations and Institutions	Strengthen the role of news, publishing, and media departments as promoters of multiliteracy, enhancing visibility for different readers and a variety of books.	Expand literary and arts-related activities as part of ECEC, basic education, upper secondary education, arts foundation education, and school or educational institution extracurricular programs.
	Transition from project-based activities to more systematic and long-term online work, ensuring that annual literacy campaigns continue and emphasizing the importance of literacy.	

At the local communication level, the strategy encourages municipal cooperation. Municipal authorities allocate resources to support literacy development and provide high-quality, up-to-date, multilingual fiction and non-fiction books, media texts, audiobooks, and digital services. Literacy initiatives are documented in municipal records, such as municipal strategies, welfare reports, or cultural and educational plans. Examples include the establishment of e-libraries and strengthened collaboration between library professionals and education staff, integrating library services into educational and professional life.

To ensure the sustainability of literacy initiatives, it is necessary to integrate all measures undertaken by different organizations and their professional staff, collectively working to enhance public literacy. Educational institutions across all levels—including libraries, primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions, and adult education centers—bear significant responsibility. Additionally, in the context of rapid technological and media developments, media and literary works remain central to literacy efforts. Through the establishment of a national and regional tiered network, effective cooperation among Finland's administrative departments, and the rational allocation of resources, the strategy supports continued professional development and training. The National Literacy Strategy 2030 thus constructs a top-down and bottom-up structural framework. Within this sustainable framework, the most critical aspect is the systematic management and coordination of literacy work across and within different levels—national, regional, and local. By establishing a cooperative system between national and local levels as well as among localities, Finland ensures that literacy development initiatives reach the entire population, with their implementation monitored and evaluated from a professional perspective.

### 3.2.2. Finland's existing practices in strengthening the framework

Finland's education governance is grounded in the principle of decentralization. Although education policies are formulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture and implemented by the Finnish National Agency for Education, local authorities retain significant autonomy and responsibility. Early childhood care and education are commonly provided through early education centers, family daycare, and group family daycare programs, with preschool education typically conducted in early education centers and schools. Primary, secondary, and higher education take place within comprehensive schools and vocational institutions. For adults, educational opportunities are more diverse. Adults may study in the same institutions as younger learners or participate in informal education through adult education centers and summer universities under the framework of flexible, non-formal adult education. Across all these organizations, educational provision—regardless of the provider—is guided by the national core curriculum and locally adapted curricula developed by municipal authorities, while also accommodating learners whose mother tongue is a minority language such as Swedish. This creates a diversified development system under a unified set of guidelines.

The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy 2030 has clarified the structure of existing literacy development efforts, making further structural refinement possible. The strategy supports the development of diverse cultural competencies across all age groups. It also explicitly considers linguistic and ethnic diversity, particularly for individuals requiring targeted literacy support. This approach ensures fairness in literacy development initiatives and promotes balanced growth in literacy and reading skills at both national and local levels.

## 3.3. Resource allocation: supporting teachers' and students' multiliteracy skills

### 3.3.1. Strategy requirements for ensuring resources

At the instructional level, the National Literacy Strategy 2030 specifies expectations and prospects for school education across different stages, students, teaching materials, and the training of professionals, including teachers. Professional training personnel include education professionals, library staff, literacy practitioners from organizations, associations, or institutions, and anyone willing to support literacy development. Many officials, media figures, writers, and publishers also advocate through their work for the development of individual multiliteracy skills, for example, through reading and learning new languages.

In terms of school education, the strategy emphasizes coordinated planning across different education levels. In Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), basic education, and migrant integration education, students' literacy development is ensured through the creation of a public reading culture, opportunities for participation in reading activities, and platforms to display reading interests. Regarding students, children and adolescents are encouraged to showcase their literary work and serve as role models for peers. Recognizing the influence of peer feedback, young learners also participate in planning author visits, reading circles, and other literary activities. By leveraging peer suggestions and other methods that stimulate reading, children's and adolescents' literacy skills and multiliteracy competencies are strengthened. For teaching materials, the strategy emphasizes the importance of digitalization and multiculturalism, reflecting the characteristics of the contemporary era and permeating the strategy throughout.

Regarding teachers, Finland provides in-service training to help professionals better identify and address learners' reading difficulties. The strategy emphasizes developing foundational and ongoing teacher education to understand the importance of multilingualism and language awareness across all subjects, enabling teachers to effectively teach multiliteracy skills within their disciplines. Specialized instructional topics and new teaching methods are designed to support both pre-service and in-service teacher training. Furthermore, teachers' multicultural education knowledge—including literacy, reading, language, literature, literary arts,

media education, and digital environments—is strengthened. High-quality digital environments are ensured in ECEC, schools, and educational institutions to enhance learners' ICT competencies and comprehensive literacy.

In addition, as Table 2 illustrates, all professionals who can identify literacy needs and low reading skills among young people and adults—such as library staff, child welfare and family service personnel, social welfare and healthcare professionals—are engaged in literacy development work. For example, continuing education is provided for professionals in prison services, substance use, and mental health work. Efforts in Finnish or Swedish as a second language, migrant integration training, learners' mother tongue education, adult basic education, multilingual instruction, and vocational education and training are emphasized to strengthen literacy development. Special attention is also given to students and learners who require additional support.

**Table 2.** Responsibilities for instruction, teachers, students, and teaching materials under the strategy

	Allocate time in schools for students to creatively produce and freely read various types of texts.
	Ensure that each basic education student has the opportunity to participate in at least two reading activities per academic year.
	Integrate participatory and shared reading into Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), and extend such practices across different educational levels, including adult learning environments and daily life activities for older adults.
	Make reading an integral part of daily routines in ECEC and schools, establish a public reading culture, and encourage upper secondary teachers and students to dedicate time for individual or collective reading.
Teaching	Ensure that schools at all levels provide learning tasks and diverse reading challenges, offering opportunities for students to demonstrate their reading interests.
	Support the development of ICT skills, media literacy, and programming abilities within ECEC and basic education.
Teaching , Teachers , and Students	As part of the national core curriculum for ECEC, education, and immigrant integration training, strengthen Finnish and Swedish language instruction for immigrants and learners with an immigrant background, along with instruction in learners' mother tongues and multilingual skills.
Teaching , Teachers , and Students	Ensure that ECEC and basic education have access to tools for assessing and supporting children's and adolescents' literacy skills. To promote multicultural literacy, provide thematic and easy-to-use learning materials across different learning areas and subjects. Incorporate methods, research, and findings from related work into the development and evaluation of activities within schools, educational institutions, and ECEC.
Students	Provide space in media for children's and adolescents' voices, enabling them to present their work and literary projects, thereby serving as reading and writing role models. Engage children and adolescents in planning author visits, reading circles, and literary events.
Curriculum and Materials	Ensure accessibility and usability of teaching materials and digital services in schools, daily life, and workplaces. Consider cultural diversity and learners' language awareness more broadly when developing national core curricula, qualification requirements, supplementary materials, and implementing local curricula.
Professional Personnel (including Teachers)	Strengthen the competencies and expertise of library staff to support literacy development and understand the needs of different target groups. Enhance the capacity of children's welfare clinic staff and family service personnel to support family reading, ensuring high-quality literacy programs in children's welfare institutions. Ensure that assessments related to reading and learning differences are available in multiple languages, and that materials can be distributed to families in various languages. Develop the training of social welfare and healthcare professionals to strengthen older adults' multiliteracy and media literacy skills.

### 3.3.2. Finland's existing practices in ensuring resources

The multiliteracy skills of professionals play a critical role in fostering literacy among children, adolescents, and adults, while also ensuring instructional quality and learner support. Professionals' multiliteracy competencies help individuals maintain sufficient literacy skills in daily life and work, enhancing both language awareness and cultural consciousness. Developing professionals' multiliteracy skills forms the foundation of this work and underpins education, welfare, and social equity [17].

As a model education system, Finland benefits at all educational levels from a carefully designed and highly standardized national policy framework. While ensuring high-quality education, this system also grants teachers considerable flexibility and autonomy in specific instructional and assessment practices. Finnish education encourages teachers to work closely with learners, jointly participating in the planning and design of educational activities. This participatory teaching approach significantly stimulates learners' potential and engagement [18].

Consequently, in cultivating adult multiliteracy, a teacher's own literacy proficiency is not only a basic requirement but also a vital driver for the continuous improvement of instructional quality and effectiveness. Emphasizing and supporting teachers in maintaining and developing their literacy skills ensures they can guide learners effectively and, through their practice, serve as role models. This approach inspires learners' enthusiasm and motivation for self-improvement, jointly advancing adult literacy education.

## 3.4. Content expansion: promoting the development of multiliteracy through public reading culture

### 3.4.1. Strategic requirements for cultivating a reading culture

Through domestic initiatives and international exchange programs, Finland's Reading Center has already fostered a favorable environment for public reading culture. Building on this foundation, the National Literacy Strategy 2030 outlines detailed actions to cultivate societal and cultural support for reading in the coming years, taking into account contemporary characteristics and emerging reader needs. Libraries, as primary sites of public reading, carry the dual function of preserving texts and disseminating culture, while serving as communication hubs. The strategy, aimed at enhancing national literacy, calls for libraries to advance in aspects of universality, digital accessibility, and lifelong learning, as detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Strategic requirements for libraries and the cultivation of public reading culture

	Individuals of all ages will become familiar with library services, including guidance on obtaining library cards in multiple languages.
	Libraries and other participants will provide diverse environments for reading and creative production for children, youth, and adults, accessible both virtually and physically.
Libraries	Ensure professional library services are available to all urban residents.
	Encourage municipal cooperation to establish e-libraries and strengthen collaboration between library professionals and ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) and education staff, creating opportunities for integrating library services into educational and work life.
	Address the needs of different language communities and multilingual services, ensuring availability of multilingual library materials.
	Promote the availability and accessibility of easy-to-use language materials, digital services, and supportive tools in daily life, work, and education.
	Utilize media and media content to enhance literacy skills in everyday life, work, and study.
	Schools and educational institutions must ensure equitable access and usability.
	Inspire and encourage lifelong reading for individuals of all ages.
	Support and encourage the development of critical literacy skills as part of media literacy, using diverse texts for learning, daily life, and work.
Social Environment	Literature will be presented through diverse reading models.
	Increase opportunities to participate in basic arts education nationwide, particularly in literary arts.
	Ensure access to reading experiences for all readers, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties.
	Protect copyrights of diverse texts and ensure their accessibility.
	Expand scientific research and reporting on multicultural literacy.
	Propose International Literacy Day as an official flag-raising day.

In cultivating a supportive social environment, the strategy emphasizes universal access to reading experiences, irrespective of age, native language, or physical ability. By employing multiple communication channels and accommodating disabilities and learning difficulties, it ensures equitable opportunities for learning and reading, thereby promoting nationwide literacy engagement. Research reports and literary works are incorporated into this effort to reinforce a culture of reading, with the overarching goal of expanding the concept of literacy to meet evolving societal needs.

### 3.4.2. Finland's existing practices in cultivating a reading culture

Encouragement to read plays a critical role in lifelong learning and the diversification of literacy skills. While an individual's interest in reading may stem from intrinsic motivation, the development of literacy often requires external support and encouragement. Reading can be promoted by friends, guardians, relatives, role models, teachers, and library professionals, and the availability of attractive books, games, and films also contributes to engagement. Providing texts and reading materials at appropriate levels for each individual helps readers find resources suited to their own needs. In Finland, adult education programs, relevant

associations, and public non-governmental organizations—including volunteer sectors (the third sector)—actively promote reading and support literacy development. A key aspect of these initiatives is fostering a sense of reader identity across different age groups, thereby diversifying literacy skills. Independent reading abilities and preferences may vary with age, but everyone should have access to a reading lifestyle that suits them.

For adult literacy courses, diversifying literacy skills requires a life-oriented approach. Participatory reading becomes an integral part of literacy tasks, adapted to different education levels and learning needs—such as workplace-related training for adults or support linked to the daily lives of older adults. The interaction with screens is also a key consideration; similar literacy programs need to integrate new media, digital platforms, and adult education practices. Ensuring that adult literacy education aligns in both content and format with ongoing digital trends is a major driver for advancing adult education to new heights.

Beyond adult literacy, the rapid development of the information age has heightened attention to media literacy in basic education. The National Literacy Strategy 2030 incorporates media literacy education and programming skills into the new literacy framework, aiming to cultivate students' information acquisition, critical thinking, and digital skills from an early age. This prepares learners to become lifelong learners capable of meeting future societal demands. The strategy also requires literacy schools to plan the use of existing resources, map current digital environments and devices, and continue investing in human and material resources as needed, reflecting Finland's long-term vision for cultivating well-rounded talent.

Multiliteracy encompasses not only content but also methods and forms of engagement. Between 2021 and 2022, coordinated by the Finnish National Agency for Education and funded through government allocations to literacy campaigns, the project Words to Take Over was launched. This initiative developed literacy and reading skills among young people through workshops centered on rap lyrics, integrating rap with native language instruction. The project created teaching methods and published guidelines for primary, secondary, and special education students, as well as youth in correctional facilities [19]. Looking ahead, under the National Literacy Strategy 2030, the government plans to organize more diversified projects targeting an even broader range of groups at the local level.

## **4. Conclusion: the unique advantages of the National Literacy Strategy 2030 in literacy education reform**

A thorough examination of literacy education reform under Finland's National Literacy Strategy 2030 reveals that Finland has set a new benchmark in global literacy education through its forward-looking vision and systematic planning. This strategy not only deepens and extends existing literacy and reading policies but also elevates the cultivation of multiliteracy to a strategic national priority. It demonstrates Finland's keen awareness of societal and technological changes and its proactive response to emerging educational challenges, as reflected in the following aspects.

### **4.1. Innovation in the concept of multiliteracy**

The strategy explicitly defines multiliteracy, encompassing the ability to interact with multimodal texts according to context, interpret, create, and critically evaluate content across different platforms, and recognize the cultural, value-based, intentional, and perspectival dimensions embedded in texts. It promotes the development of individual competencies across various domains. For example, the PISA reading assessment presents students with content from modern forums, blogs, and peer-created websites to evaluate practical

skills such as identifying advertisements and retrieving information—aligning closely with the strategy's understanding of multiliteracy as a set of real-world, applicable skills.

#### 4.2. Whole-of-society participation and collaborative mechanisms

Finland has implemented a top-down, systematic approach to advancing multiliteracy in line with contemporary educational demands. The strategy emphasizes not only foundational literacy and diverse expression skills from early childhood through primary and secondary education but also addresses the learning needs of adults, particularly those seeking to improve literacy for social integration, personal development, or adaptation to cultural contexts, including immigrants and minority groups. This comprehensive, lifelong literacy system exemplifies Finland's commitment to educational equity and inclusion, supporting the creation of a learning society and the principles of lifelong learning.

#### 4.3. Continuous professional development and training of educators

Finland maintains high academic and professional standards for teachers and education professionals. For those engaged in early childhood education, a bachelor's degree is the minimum requirement, complemented by both pre-service and in-service training, including practical teaching research and professional development programs organized by higher education institutions. Teachers at other educational levels also receive ongoing, state-supported professional development opportunities throughout their careers. In adult literacy education, the success of literacy initiatives depends not only on the expertise of professional educators but also on the active engagement and motivation of learners themselves. These two elements are mutually reinforcing and constitute key factors in enhancing literacy outcomes.

The high standards for educators are supported by extensive training opportunities, tailored professional development programs, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a culture of lifelong learning, creating a robust environment for the growth and advancement of literacy professionals. Collectively, these measures contribute to the overall quality of Finnish education and the improvement of learners' literacy skills.

#### 4.4. Equity and inclusivity in resource allocation

The National Literacy Strategy 2030 emphasizes equity and inclusivity in resource allocation, acknowledging differences related to gender, socioeconomic status, immigration background, and age. For example, PISA reports specifically highlight how these variables influence student outcomes, underscoring their relevance in resource distribution. Within the strategy, Finland prioritizes two core principles: first, equity—ensuring that individuals from diverse economic backgrounds, family situations, occupations, and social roles have opportunities to develop multiliteracy; second, inclusivity—guaranteeing that learners of different mother tongues, ages, and those with reading or other learning difficulties can access literacy development opportunities.

The strategy not only highlights the significance of multiliteracy as foundational for personal growth, societal progress, and innovation but also sets clear, long-term goals for 2030: establishing a stable framework, ensuring essential resources, and expanding the scope of literacy concepts. It promotes mastery of traditional literacy skills while fostering innovative thinking, critical analysis, and cross-cultural communication, aiming to cultivate versatile talents capable of meeting the demands of future society.

While Finland continues to explore and refine the practical implementation of literacy development, the achievements and potential demonstrated by the National Literacy Strategy 2030 provide invaluable insights and guidance for global literacy initiatives. The strategy not only transforms Finland's domestic education system but also serves as a model for advancing educational equity and quality worldwide. Moving forward,

Finland will continue to adapt its implementation strategies to align with evolving national needs, further strengthening the strategic framework and deepening its impact.

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