**Draft Revision**: Education and Information Literacy: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*

Education and information literacy is fundamental to the mission of libraries of all types and the foundation for intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. Libraries provide access to information and ideas through their facilities, resources, and services. Libraries foster the ability to use those resources through educational programs and instruction.

The value and importance of intellectual freedom and its relationship to education is widely recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948. These principles are in strong alignment with the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights*.

The importance of intellectual freedom is expressed in both documents, and the necessity of education to the development of intellectual freedom is specifically discussed in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages …
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial, or religious groups, and

shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.1

The *Library Bill of Rights* “affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas,” making them resources for facilitating education, developing curiosity, seeking knowledge, and further expanding the principles of intellectual freedom.

Access to information reflecting a variety of viewpoints is listed as the first principle in Article I:

Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

Article II of the *Library Bill of Rights* emphasizes the importance of fostering access to information by providing materials that allow users to evaluate content and context, and to find information representing multiple viewpoints:

Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

Libraries and library workers foster education and lifelong learning by promoting free expression and facilitating the exchange of ideas between users. Libraries use resources, programming, and services to strengthen access to information and thus build a foundation of intellectual freedom. In their roles as educators, library workers create an environment that nurtures intellectual freedom in all library resources and services by:

* developing collections and services with multiple perspectives that empower individuals in the pursuit of their own interests
* providing programming that strengthens multiple methods of learning and expands opportunities to discover and respond to ideas
* leading instruction framed around information literacy skills and critical thinking
* advocating for the love of reading diverse voices and using the library to explore unfamiliar or controversial concepts

Through engaging in these educational services, libraries empower individuals to explore ideas, access and evaluate information, draw meaning from information presented in a variety of formats, develop valid conclusions, and express new ideas. Such endeavors facilitate access to information and offer a path to a robust appreciation of intellectual freedom rights and the value of libraries as cornerstones of the communities they serve.

1. [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/), Article 26, United Nations General Assembly, December 10, 1948.

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