

Celebrating ITLS's Inaugural Certificate in Para-Librarianship Cohort

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Photos from USU's inaugural Certificate in Para-Librarianship celebration.

opportunity to expand their knowledge and then use that learning in meaningful ways with the students they serve. The inaugural cohort's completion marks an important milestone for ITLS and Canyons School District, and the beginning of what participants can continue to bring back to their schools.

Congratulations to the 19 inaugural certificate recipients and to Dr. Kelli Munns for helping bring this partnership and vision to life. Their achievement is more than a certificate. It represents new knowledge, new possibilities, and the potential for that learning to reach students, one library, one educator, and sometimes one book at a time.

When school library professionals are given the opportunity to see their roles in a new way, the impact can reach far beyond the library itself.

This year, 19 elementary paraprofessional librarians from Canyons School District completed Utah State University's inaugural Certificate in Para-Librarianship, a three-semester professional learning program led by Dr. Kelli Munns through the ITLS department. The program was designed to help participants build knowledge and skills in areas such as literacy, inquiry-based learning, information and media literacy, technology, and supporting students and teachers.

But the learning did not end when the coursework did. Participants returned to their school libraries with new ideas about what they could do and how they could better respond to the individual students walking through their doors. For one participant, that meant rethinking how the library could support a student who was learning English. Rather than seeing the library only as a place for the student to practice English, she began thinking about how reading could support the student's learning while also honoring their home language and culture. She purchased books in both English and the student's native language. That simple decision gave the student opportunities to continue developing English skills while also reading in a familiar language and sharing books with family. A few books became a way to connect learning, language, culture, and belonging. That moment captures the larger purpose of the certificate program: giving educators the