## Abstract

This article reports qualitative findings from interviews with 41 transfer students at a large public research institution in the Western United States. This study applied an asset-based action research approach. Transfer students shared their experiences with public libraries as children, in primary and secondary school libraries, and with libraries at their previous academic institutions. The findings demonstrated the power of students’ memories and emotions associated with libraries. We identified student identities, relationships, and associations with library spaces as important sub-themes. We suggest practical actions for academic librarians working with transfer students.  
 Keywords: transfer students, academic libraries, qualitative research

## Introduction

Within the past three years, library and information science (LIS) literature has begun to explore transfer students’ connections with academic libraries through qualitative methods. This study was designed to gather qualitative information about transfer students at a large, top tier public research institution, the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder). Interviews with transfer students explored how students described their identities, overall transition experiences to the university, and prior experiences with public, school, and academic libraries. We interviewed 41 transfer students, about half of whom were in their first semester since transferring and half of whom had completed two or more semesters at their new campus. Transfer students were defined as students who had attended or transferred credits from one or more higher education institutions prior to attending CU Boulder. The research team hoped to learn how academic libraries can better support transfer students’ success through a deeper understanding of the context of students’ lives, strengths, intersecting identities, and academic work. As Esteban-Guitart and Moll state “...through investigating and documenting the many particular funds of knowledge that students have, their identities can be validated and incorporated into the school” (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014, p. 36). This article focuses on the findings relevant to students’ experiences with libraries throughout their lives. Understanding these transition experiences can inform the support structures academic libraries provide for transfer students.

## Theoretical Framework

Several theories informed this study. At the ontological level, sociocultural theory and constructivism influenced us. Briefly, sociocultural theory originated in Vygotsky’s work, situating learning within social, cultural, and historical contexts (Searle, 2017). Sociocultural theory posits learning as a negotiation that occurs through social interactions (Searle, 2017). Constructivism draws from Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner, recognizing that learners make sense of the world through mental models and should be given the opportunity to build on prior knowledge (Hershberg, 2014). While these two theories are sometimes viewed as separate camps within education, Packer and Goicoechea identify both sociocultural theory and constructivism as lenses for understanding the ways that learning, identity, and community are entwined (2000, pp. 235, 239). In considering the importance of context in students’ lived experiences, we were also influenced by Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory of human development, which visualizes concentric circles of “development-in-context” (individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pp. 9–10). Bronfenbrenner’s work is derived from both Lewin’s work on the individual’s interaction with their environment and Piaget’s conception of the agency and creativity involved in a person’s internalization of reality (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 12).

Educators have critiqued deficit-based research and practice that take a pathologizing view of learners’ backgrounds and life experiences (Hadjistassou, 2008). In contrast, asset-based or strengths-based approaches are being emphasized in education (Hadjistassou, 2008; Teacher and Leader Policy Office, 2020). These approaches encompass such theories as funds of knowledge, culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Gay, 2000; N. González & Moll, 2002; Hammond, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2017; Teacher and Leader Policy Office, 2020). These approaches share respect for the agency of individuals to make their own decisions and embrace a growth mindset, and also emphasize the assets individuals bring to the learning environment from their families and communities. In higher education, scholars have called for a funds of knowledge lens to be applied to students in transition, such as transfer students (Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2018b, p. 5). With the underlying premise that “people are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge,” funds of knowledge are compatible with theories on social capital, discussed below (Moll et al., 2005, pp. ix–x; Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2018a).

At a tangible level, this project was designed with an action research approach. As practitioner-librarians, action research allowed us to explore with an eye towards improving our librarianship and programming for transfer students, with the ultimate goal of impacting “local policy and practice” (Hines et al., 2020). Action research is an accepted method for higher education practitioners to understand phenomena and iterate methods of practice within their institutions (Gordon, 2008; Hinchey, 2016; Mertler, 2017).

## Literature Review

The following sections center literature most relevant to the present study, focusing on complex definitions of transfer students, transfer capital, race and transfer, a brief overview of transfer student engagement in LIS literature, and a deeper exploration into the five existing LIS qualitative studies with transfer students. Transfer student scholars call for more qualitative research, observing that prior quantitative studies have frequently contributed to a deficit perspective, often lumping students into one category as “transfer students” when their experiences, identities, and cultural capital are more nuanced and varied (Bahr et al., 2013, p. 462; Bensimon, 2007, pp. 448–449; Crisp & Nuñez, 2014, p. 309). For a very thorough review on the large body of literature on transfer students we suggest Bahr et al., 2013 and Taylor & Jain, 2017.

There is no single definition that can capture the experiences and identities of all transfer students. A common, yet simplistic definition describes transfer students as students who have attended more than one institution of higher education (McGuire & Belcheir, 2013, p. 46; Peter & Cataldi, 2005, p. iii). Various definitions discuss the types of transfer student pathways, including descriptive terms such as reverse, lateral, vertical, swirling, dual enrollment, and stopout (Li, 2009, pp. 207–208; McGuire & Belcheir, 2013, p. 38; Peter & Cataldi, 2005; Porter, 1989, p. iv). Transfer students may overlap with nontraditional students, underrepresented students, student veterans, and other student populations (Brown & Gross, 2011, p. 46; Crisp & Nuñez, 2014, p. 292; Durdella & Kim, 2012, p. 122; National Center for Education Statistics, 2015, p. 1). Because of the complexity of student backgrounds, scholars highlight the importance of understanding students’ lives in context and as the “whole student” with the goal of humanizing students and avoiding assumptions about their needs (Crisp & Nuñez, 2014, p. 308; Deil-Amen, 2011, pp. 82–84; Jain et al., 2011, p. 255).

As research evolved from the early work on student departure characterized by Tinto (1975), constructs such as transfer capital have emerged. Transfer capital was coined by Laanan et al. (2010) and is described as the knowledge and experience students bring with them from prior institutions. It is also defined as students’ knowledge and connections with support services, faculty, and staff at their new institution (Bensimon, 2007; Laanan et al., 2010, p. 180; Rios-Aguilar & Kiyama, 2018a, p. 8; Robison et al., 2018). O’Brien (2011) concludes that, “informational capital is an important and necessary form of social capital during the transfer process” (p. 161). Troublingly, O’Brien’s examination of the information networks of underrepresented students who transferred from a community college to a public research university finds that students’ relationships with faculty and staff from their community college did not carry over to their new institution, indicating that students are missing connections with “gatekeepers” who hold valuable information about the new institution (2011, pp. 157–158). Within LIS literature, Robison, Fawley and Marshall (2018) find no connection between transfer capital and information literacy instruction in their survey of transfer students, an interesting and perhaps counterintuitive finding to transfer theory and social constructivist theory. However, it is unclear how the researchers developed, defined, and measured this construct in their survey (Robison et al., 2018, p. 869).

Work on transfer students and race makes up another important category of the transfer student literature. Scholars observed that earlier work on student departure and transfer students did not accurately describe experiences for students from non-dominant cultural or ethnic backgrounds, and, in fact, put the burden of student success on students’ backgrounds and personal characteristics (Bensimon, 2007, p. 446; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón et al., 2000, p. 128). Prior work highlights how educational pathways influence students’ college aspirations, in particular noting that students of color are often advised to enroll in vocational programs rather than setting their sights on four-year degrees or more prestigious institutions (Crisp & Nuñez, 2014, p. 310). In response, researchers have written on transfer students and critical race theory (CRT); intersectionality; how minoritized students gain access to higher education and experience transitions; and the role of family and support networks (Jain et al., 2011, p. 258; Nora & Rendon, 1990; Rendón et al., 2000; Torres et al., 2006).

### Academic Libraries & Transfer Student Engagement

Within academic libraries, some of the strategies for engaging transfer students include partnering with two-year or four-year librarians at institutions where transfer students commonly originate; participating in transfer student orientations; building personal librarian programs; closely collaborating with faculty; creating childcare or family spaces in academic libraries; visibly representing students’ cultural backgrounds; and inviting their lived experiences and languages into library spaces (Harrick & Fullington, 2019; Jain et al., 2011; Kearns et al., 2017; Lafrance & Kealey, 2017; MacDonald & Mohanty, 2017). Offering peer learning or reciprocal learning in library spaces is another strategy (Flaga, 2006; Jain et al., 2011; Townsend, 2008). Librarians note that forming close campus partnerships is often more effective than libraries attempting to offer one-off activities for transfer students (Jacobson et al., 2017; McBride et al., 2017; Whang et al., 2017).

#### Qualitative LIS Studies with Transfer Students

To date, there are only five studies that gather qualitative information about the experiences of transfer students and academic libraries. The first study, Whang et al. (2017), engaged eight transfer students and eleven staff members at the University of Washington (UW) in a pilot project of design thinking and rapid prototyping over a period of months. They identify challenges students face and ways the library can meet students’ needs through programming (Whang et al., 2017). Richter-Weikum and Seeber (2018), conducted a study at a large commuter campus which received more transfer students than any other institution in Colorado (p. 65). The authors find that nearly 90% of students report feeling comfortable finding a peer-reviewed article, whether or not they have had prior information literacy instruction (Richter-Weikum & Seeber, 2018, p. 67). Students prefer to self-navigate library resources via online tutorials compared with in-person help-seeking (Richter-Weikum & Seeber, 2018, p. 68). Harrick and Fullington (2019) conducted focus groups with twenty-one transfer students at Brooklyn College (BC), a commuter school in the City University of New York (CUNY) system, focusing on the barriers students face and how the library can alleviate these issues. These authors noted that transfer students’ prior library experiences in the CUNY system could be a liability with specific procedures that worked differently at BC, though the authors did see opportunities for CUNY librarians to work together across the system to discuss and mediate these differences (Harrick & Fullington, 2019, p. 84). At University of Nevada, Las Vegas, a mid-sized comprehensive institution, Heinbach et al. (2019) surveyed and interviewed transfer students and their library use**.** Using an asset-based perspective, the authors identify transfer students’ key strengths including self-sufficiency and resourcefulness (Heinbach et al., 2019). This study also identifies barriers students face, such as repetitive information literacy one-shots within the libraries (Heinbach et al., 2019). At Pepperdine University, researchers interviewed twelve transfer students (Vinyard, 2020). This study poses specific questions about students’ research practices, and finds that a third of students interviewed have asked librarians for transactional help at a prior institution, two students have previously consulted librarians for research assistance, and seven report they rely on faculty for research guidance (Vinyard, 2020, pp. 347, 349). The study also finds that students’ prior library experiences affect how likely they are to ask librarians for help at their new institution (Vinyard, 2020, p. 349).

All of these studies identify transfer students’ prior knowledge as a strength in adapting to their new campus, except Harrick and Fullington, who find students’ prior library experiences in the CUNY system could be a liability with specific procedures that work differently at Brooklyn College (Harrick & Fullington, 2019, p. 84; Heinbach et al., 2019; Richter-Weikum & Seeber, 2018, p. 67; Vinyard, 2020; Whang et al., 2017). Three of the studies find that students want subject-specific information from their library as well as information about wayfinding in library spaces (Harrick & Fullington, 2019, pp. 84–85; Vinyard, 2020, p. 354; Whang et al., 2017, p. 308).

The present study is designed to explore transfer students’ identities, transition experiences, and experiences with academic libraries. The literature cited above illuminates the need to holistically understand students’ experiences and identities, and also raises questions for further research on transfer capital, such as how transfer students apply prior knowledge of libraries in a new academic context. Our research builds on the valuable work of the previous five qualitative LIS studies. This exploration uses strengths-based frameworks, as do Heinbach et al. (2019). Similar to Whang et al.’s (2017) article at UW, the institutional setting for this study focuses on transfer students at a large public research campus. Similar to Pepperdine’s residential context, 29% of CU Boulder undergraduates lived on campus in 2017, with 72.7% of all undergraduate students living on campus or close by in the college town of [institution town] (institution, 2017b). As a large, public and more traditional campus, CU Boulder offers a different combination of institutional contexts than previous LIS studies. This study uniquely contributes to the literature by investigating transfer students’ experiences with all types of libraries, from childhood to the present. Among current LIS qualitative studies, this study includes the largest number of participants, and is the only study with approximately half of students recruited in their first semester at CU Boulder and half with two or more semesters at CU Boulder.

## Method

### CU Boulder Context

CU Boulder is the flagship campus of a four-university system in Colorado, and is a large public research university where over 34,000 students were enrolled in fall 2018 at the start of data collection for this article. CU Boulder is marketed to undergraduates as a traditional campus with dorms, dining halls, and a Division I football team. For many undergraduates, the university is placed at the center of academic and social life. With the university’s history as a predominately White institution (PWI), 65.9% of CU Boulder students identified as White in 2018, with Hispanic/Latino students as the next highest racial/ethnic category of 11.4% (CU Boulder, 2020b). Asian students represented 7.8% of the student body and African-American students accounted for 2.5% (CU Boulder, 2020b).

Transfer students made up 19.5% of incoming students in fall 2018 (CU Boulder, 2020). In academic year 2017-2018, 57% of all entering transfer students came from out-of-state institutions (Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2019). Among the 864 transfer students originating from within Colorado, 50.6% matriculated to CU Boulder from two-year public institutions and 45.9% came from four-year public institutions in the state (Colorado Department of Higher Education, 2019). Among the transfer student population, there was a slightly higher percentage of first generation college students (22%) when compared to the broader undergraduate population as a whole (16.9%) (CU Boulder, 2020b). While 66% of transfer students admitted in fall 2018 believed that they would belong at CU Boulder (CU Boulder, 2018), results from a fall 2016 survey of CU Boulder transfer students indicated that 47% found it hard to make connections with other students on campus and 36% of students found it difficult to connect with faculty (CU Boulder, 2016). Students who chose not to continue at CU Boulder indicated difficulty connecting to others on campus as one of the primary reasons for leaving, as well as financial reasons (CU Boulder, 2017a). These numbers indicate the optimism with which transfer students enroll at CU Boulder and the practical difficulties of making meaningful connections once on campus.

The University Libraries at CU Boulder span five libraries with one main building and four more specialized branches centered around the disciplines of music, business, earth sciences, and engineering, math, and physics. Library employees’ race and ethnic composition parallel the predominantly White nature of the student body, however the percentage of White library employees (75.5%) is even greater than that of the White students on campus (CU Boulder, 2020a). All three of the research team members hold faculty librarian positions, identify as White, and may be read as female-presenting.

### Research Design & Interview Protocol

To understand transfer students’ experiences in their new environment and with academic libraries, and to center students’ voices in the research process, this article reports findings on the following research questions:

1. How are transfer students relating to libraries? What are transfer students’ past experiences with libraries?
2. What are ways that the CU Boulder can engage/support transfer students’ transitions?

With approval from the campus Institutional Review Board, our research team of three librarians developed a protocol of questions exploring students’ transition experiences, identities, and library experiences. The interview protocol was pilot tested with five colleagues who were transfer students as undergraduates. The pilot testing yielded invaluable changes to the interview questions, wording, and question order. The final protocol (Appendix A) contained three parts, with the first section asking general questions about students’ prior institution(s), reasons for leaving, choice of their new institution, and identities. The second section focused on students’ experiences with libraries, including public, K-12, and academic libraries. The final section of the interview protocol zoomed out to students’ campus experiences broadly, gathering students’ reflections, suggestions for changes, and advice for incoming transfer students. In addition to the interview protocol, we also developed a short demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) that asked students about their identities, commute to campus, employment, and whether students wanted to receive the results of the research.

Students participated in semi-structured, qualitative interviews held in library conference rooms ranging from twenty minutes to close to an hour in length. In each interview, the research team included a primary interviewer and a secondary interviewer also acting as notetaker. This process allowed the research team to consider themes and make adjustments to the interview process during data collection, also known as “peer debriefing” (Miller, 2008). The research team decided to invite further participation by holding a “member check” session to share preliminary themes with students and solicit their feedback as one method of increasing the validity of the study (Miller, 2008; Sandelowski, 2008), although only one student attended this optional session.

### Recruitment

Study participants were transfer students (n=41) at CU Boulder. For the purposes of this study, transfer students were defined as students who had attended or transferred credits from one or more higher education institutions prior to attending CU Boulder. All currently enrolled transfer students at CU Boulder were included in the population for study. Email was the primary means of recruitment. Students self-selected to participate in interviews, first agreeing to an informed consent document and then scheduling a time for an interview using the Springshare product, LibCal. Students were offered a $10 gift card as an incentive. We initially recruited 20 students who were in their first semester since transferring. To include a wider range of perspectives, we extended recruitment to include 21 students who had transferred to CU Boulder between fall 2016 and spring 2018 and had completed two or more semesters at CU Boulder. Information gathered represented both the fresh transition impressions of students who were newly arrived as well as how students’ identities and adjustments evolved over time. These interviews occurred in person during fall 2018 and spring 2019.

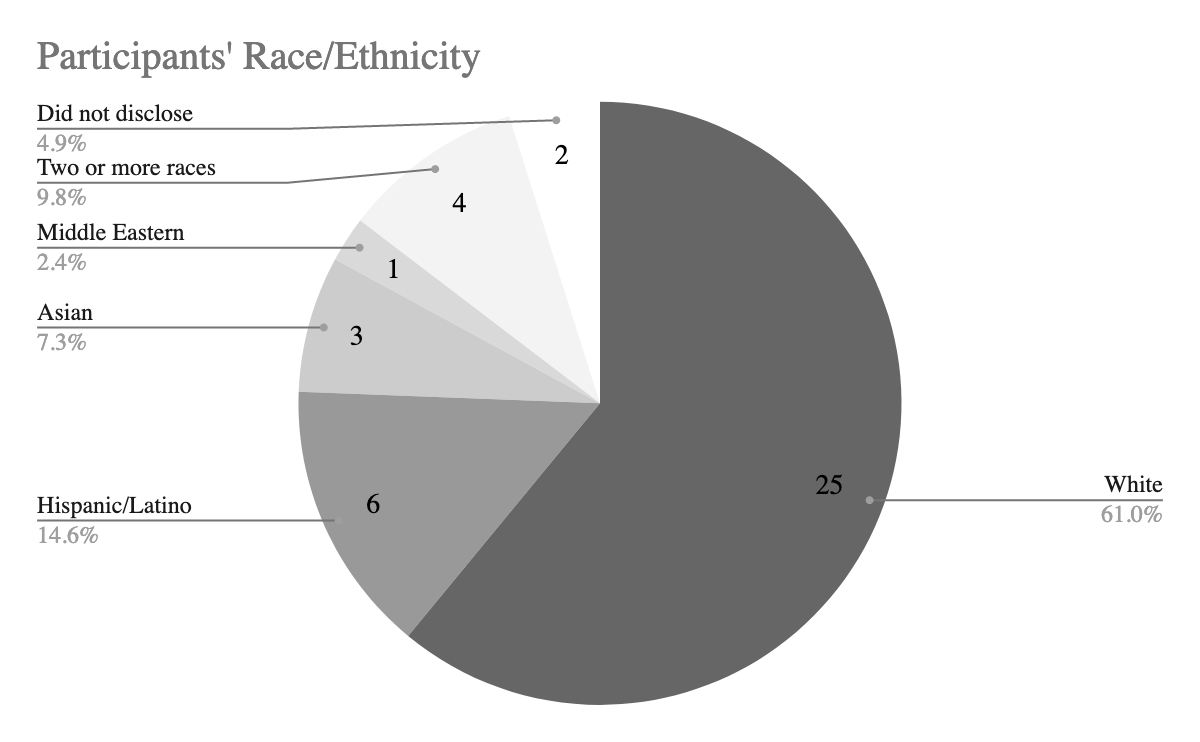
### Participants

Prior to each interview, students completed the demographic form (Appendix B). Self-reported identities allowed transfer students to speak for themselves and helped us to contextualize their experience at CU Boulder. The majority of students had attended one other academic institution previously (n=31), yet ten students reported attending two or three other institutions prior to transferring. In terms of class standing, interviewees included freshmen through senior transfer students with a slight majority of students self-reporting as juniors (n=13).

The transfer students we interviewed most commonly majored in the sciences with computer science (n=7); ecology & evolutionary biology (n=3); molecular, cellular, & developmental biology (n=2); and geology (n=2) as the most frequently reported science majors among interviewees. In all, there were 12 different sciences majors, 12 different social sciences majors, and 6 different humanities majors represented across all interviewees..

While several students identified themselves as “nontraditional students” (n=15) and commented on being older than their traditional student peers, the average age of students interviewed for this project was 23, only slightly older than students entering and completing their undergraduate degree within four years of graduating high school. The majority of students indicated that they were 22 years old (n=10), but interviewees ranged in age from 19 years old (n=4) to 37 years old (n=1).

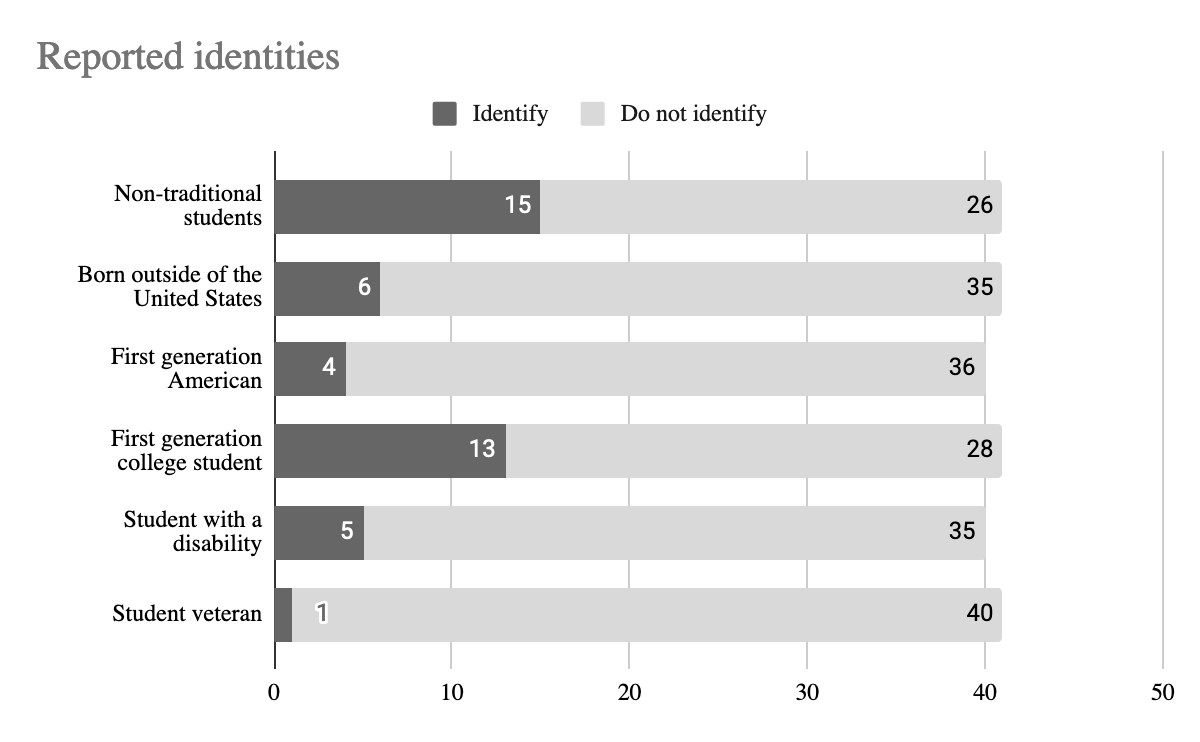
In terms of gender and race or ethnicity, female participants comprised a slight majority (n=24). Students interviewed identified as White (n=25), Hispanic/Latino (n=6), multiracial (n=4), Asian (n=3), and Middle Eastern (n=1), with two students who chose not to disclose their race (Figure 1). No interviewees self-identified as Black or Native American, though there are a small number of transfer students identified with these descriptors in CU Boulder records.



**Figure 1**

*Participants’ Race/Ethnicity*

Interviewees described several other aspects of their identities as well (Figure 2). Notably, almost one third of transfer students (n=13) identified as a first generation college student, born outside of the United States (n=6), first generation Americans (n=4), students with disabilities (n=5), and veterans (n=1). Interviewees who self-identified as having been born outside of the United States may overlap with students who identified as first generation American. Additionally, either of these identities could also refer to an international student identity which we did not ask about specifically on the demographic forms yet was discussed several times during the interviews.



**Figure 2**

*Summary of Student Identities*

### Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed and coded using Dedoose software for qualitative analysis. We discussed preliminary themes from the interviews and collectively developed a list of initial codes. This process followed a hybrid approach using deductive coding to create the initial list (Saldaña, 2016, p. 75). Next, incorporating inductive processes, additional codes were added as new themes emerged (Saldaña, 2016, p. 75). We applied these codes individually in a first round of coding and then discussed the coded data as a group (Richards, 2015; Saldaña, 2016, p. 37). Following the group discussion, we completed a second round of coding individually to focus on the preliminary themes identified as the most relevant to students’ library journeys. A second group discussion followed for theoretical saturation or “arrival,” consistency, and consensus on the themes (Richards, 2015, pp. 139, 155; Saldaña, 2016, p. 37). During this portion we employed an audit trail of note-taking and memos as an intermediate step between the raw data and emerging findings (Given & Saumure, 2008; Rodgers, 2008). We sought credibility and confirmability of the analysis by maintaining students’ rich descriptions and voices, as well as by adhering closely to the data and revisiting the data when determining themes (Given & Saumure, 2008). While the results cannot be said to be *generalizable*, they may be *transferable* to similar research contexts with transfer students at large research institutions (Miller, 2008).

## Findings & Discussion

Regarding the first research question, students relayed richly detailed descriptions of their current and previous experiences with libraries and librarians, including public, K-12 schools, and previous institutions as well as the academic libraries at CU Boulder. Findings related to the second research question about academic library support for transfer students may be found in the “Practical Implications for Libraries” section.

### Connections to Memory, Nostalgia & Emotion

We noted these library journeys revealed nostalgia, memory, and emotion that not only shaped students’ past experiences, but offered insight into their present library use or non-use. The following sections will expand on this theme of memory, nostalgia, and emotion that students described via the subcategories, *identities, relationships*, and *library spaces*, including the range of both positive and negative experiences students shared with us. While there was overlap between students’ identities, relationships, and spaces, we found it helpful to explore more deeply how these aspects function from transfer students’ perspectives, both in following students’ past trajectories and considering their current interactions with libraries.

#### Identities

As discussed in the broader transfer student literature, students in this study had a range of identities and life experiences they brought to CU Boulder, with no neat categories associated with the “transfer student” label (McGuire & Belcheir, 2013, p. 46; Peter & Cataldi, 2005, p. iii). Students’ multiple identities and transfer pathways affected their experiences of relationships on campus, and their preferences for library spaces. The interviewers coded 50 excerpts specifically looking at “multiple” identities students held simultaneously.

Scholars have critiqued the transfer student literature for omitting racialization as an important experience for minoritized transfer students (Jain et al., 2011). Some students interviewed in this study associated their race, national origin, or first language with discrimination and barriers at CU Boulder, as well as with sources of strength, support, and community. For example, an international student who had attended two institutions in the U.S. before coming to CU Boulder shared experiences of microaggression, marginalization, and discrimination including repeatedly mispronouncing their name, lack of understanding of cultural differences in classroom participation, racial slurs from other students on campus, and an incident of physical violence based on race. These experiences contributed to deep feelings of loneliness, isolation, and mental health challenges the student experienced. Another student who identified as Middle Eastern and in their first semester at CU Boulder commented on not seeing much diversity on campus, but not experiencing racism, either. However, this same student also commuted and worked nearly full-time, finding these aspects of their life were challenged by the CU Boulder campus system being set up for residential students. International students who were not first-language English speakers shared language challenges in their campus experience broadly, such as during orientation, and with course and library materials. International students’ experiences indicated that their American peers did not always recognize these challenges or show willingness to befriend a student across differences of language, race, and national origin, adding layers onto the transfer student experience.

#### Relationships

##### Early Experiences: Librarians as Mentors & “Mean”

During data analysis we were surprised by how strongly the theme of relationships emerged, at all life stages of students’ experiences with libraries. The literature suggests that positive relationships with a school or public librarian can be part of a network of encouragement for children learning to read and developing information literacy skills (de Groot & Branch, 2009, p. 53, 59; Lance & Kachel, 2018). Spilsbury (2005) studied children’s neighborhood networks, finding that eight of 44 children knew a librarian by name and three quarters of the children in the study regularly visited their public library branch (2005, p. 129). These authors found that children’s relationships with public library staff played a critically important role within their neighborhood social networks, with library staff protecting kids from bullying within the neighborhoods, mediating disputes among children, and serving as a trusted adult outside of the family with whom children could talk about their lives and problems (Spilsbury, 2005, p. 129-130). The opposite effect has also been observed, as Holt and Holt (2010) describe, negative interactions with library staff may well discourage children from visiting the library (p. 50-51). A Funds of Knowledge perspective also regards relationships as social practices and as a type of resource that help express identities (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014, p. 36). Stanton-Salazar framed the importance of relationships starkly, asserting that the success of minoritized children depends on their access to and relationships with institutional agents who can connect or obscure their access to information and resources (Stanton-Salazar, 1999).

Students’ relational memories included connections with both librarians and library staff, and even remembrances of specific names. Of a public librarian, one student shared, “...honestly, I still remember one of my mentors was a librarian there. Margaret [last name redacted]. Never forget. She was great... I remember she was, like, a huge influence on me.” Students shared some positive experiences with K-12 libraries, although the relationships with librarians did not usually come through such strong lenses of nostalgia. One student described their high school librarian as, “a huge part of the community” who “used to have chai and hot chocolate for the students” but could not recall the librarian’s name. What seemed most salient, in this case, was the welcoming space the librarian created for students, as this student described spending a lot of time and eating lunch in the high school library. The memories of the library space in this example are stronger, perhaps, than the relationship with the librarian, but positive, nonetheless.

In contrast to the largely positive memories of public libraries as children, students shared some stronger negative memories from K-12 libraries, including this elementary school library experience from a student studying biochemistry, who described the librarian as “kind of mean, and I didn’t feel like she liked students because we would go into the library and hang out and walk around the small library and look at books together. And I guess that for her, that was probably too loud for us to sit as younger children.” This student later described not really having a “library feeling” one way or the other at their community college and in their first semester after transferring had not interacted at all yet with CU Boulder librarians but enjoyed the library as a study space. Other students described their K-12 librarians as “cringy! So unhelpful,” as “the worst” when sitting through a citation lesson with a high school librarian, and as “really not pleasant people to deal with.” Of these three students’ college experiences, the first had not had relationships or interactions with library staff at CU Boulder or their prior institution but expressed wanting a personal librarian to talk with. The second student received instruction from librarians but found more value in the libraries’ study spaces, including visiting a public library regularly to study. And the third discussed preferring to find materials online.

We questioned whether these positive early experiences with public libraries influenced students’ engagement with library spaces later on. It is notable that while these negative K-12 memories describe specific library employees, the emotion may in some cases saturate students’ later impressions of libraries, and their comfort and willingness to engage with librarians, library spaces, and resources.

##### Libraries Supporting the Social Fabric

As Whang, et al (2017) identified, there is a certain amount of loss of social capital when students leave previous institutions. Rios-Aguilar and Kiyama connect Funds of Knowledge with social capital, where relationships can be both barriers for students or assets to navigating college (Rios-Aguilar and Kiyama, 2018, p. 11). And yet, in line with previous literature reporting students’ strengths (Harrick & Fullington, 2019; Heinbach et al., 2019; O’Brien, 2011, p. 161; Richter-Weikum & Seeber, 2018), the research team found that students interviewed often had a framework for ways of navigating college, and were looking for information via relationships to help them become situated in their new institutional context.

Loneliness was a major aspect we discerned from both first semester transfer students and from some transfer students who had been at CU Boulder for several semesters. As discussed in the “Identities” section, international transfer students identified a number of barriers to a sense of belonging and social integration on campus. Among positive relationships and interactions that lead to feelings of support for international transfer students, students identified roommates, an affinity group student association, staff at several campus offices, professors, a local church, and beneficial communication with police officers. In understanding the need for campuses to support students’ racial identities, Hurtado and Carter (1997) found that students who belonged to a racial or ethnic student organization on campus had a higher sense of belonging (p. 336). Academic libraries have opportunities to make linguistic diversity and students’ cultures of origin more visible in library spaces. A student who identified as gay found the LGBTQ+ community at CU Boulder to be “very, very weak” describing gay friends who had transferred away from CU Boulder in search of more community. Academic libraries can also host dialogues or workshops on race, culture, and other identities, in partnership with student affairs and student organizations (Damasco, 2019; Everett, 2018; Zúñiga, 2003). Non-traditional and commuter students shared relationship challenges around time management, different life stages compared to “traditional” aged students, and non-residential living arrangements. As one student described “you didn’t make friends in the dorms.” One student who identified as non-traditional described feeling like, “you're the only person” among traditional-aged college students. While not all of these have a direct connection to libraries, these social experiences are important for library staff to be aware of and potentially help mitigate.

As in earlier life stages when students recounted school and public library experiences during the interviews, libraries continued to play a role in student relationships with peers at CU Boulder. The research team was especially interested in ways students described the role libraries played in fostering social interactions and feeling connected to others on campus. Within library contexts, several students discussed studying in libraries with friends or family for company and accountability. In these recollections the campus library played a clear role in students’ socialization through group study, as well as serving as a space for conducting their academic work. Peer relationships influenced how students approached research assignments, as well. A former community college student studying finance told us they used their past institution’s library database for a CU Boulder assignment because they were familiar with it. The same student also discussed talking to a friend with life experience related to their research assignment. These examples demonstrated student resourcefulness in using human networks and familiar resources to accomplish their academic work. A student who identified as White, gay, and as a nontraditional student also described drawing from peer relationships and life experiences, including intersectional and intercultural identities. While this student did not mention library resources directly in this example, it is worth noting how the student viewed human resources and relationships as sources of knowledge within their information landscape.

##### Seeking Help

Help-seeking can be paradoxical among transfer students who sometimes do not seek help becauseof their prior academic experiences, as Whang et al. described, and as this study found (Whang et al., 2017, p. 305). This could take the shape of students’ strengths in resourcefulness and self-sufficiency, but could also result in a sense of overwhelm when students found themselves struggling to navigate a new campus, alongside the perception that they *should* already know how to navigate college structures (Whang et al., 2017, p. 305). We heard these kinds of experiences primarily from students who were in their first semester after transferring.

Among the transfer students we interviewed, students regarded help-seeking as relational, whether in connection to library staff or peers, when interacting in library spaces or engaging with library resources. Students both wanted and were unsure of seeking help from librarians. A few students shared experiences that indicated uncertainty on how to connect with a librarian, for example, “it would be really cool to have somebody in the Leeds [business] library and most of the people that work there are students.” While this library is staffed with librarians and library employees who are always on call for help, student workers are the most visible at the public service desk, and this influenced this student’s perceptions of what services were available. This student had previously transferred from a large, urban commuter campus with a tiered reference model and had received library instruction but may not have known librarians were available for consultations at their prior institution.

Another student who identified as non-traditional and came from a large local community college candidly described their concerns reaching out to librarians, “I feel a little socially awkward doing that sometimes, like *approaching* librarians. I always feel like I'm wasting their time… it is intimidating to approach librarians sometimes.” We empathized with the sense of vulnerability this student expressed in considering asking for help, which involves admitting a need, and approaching a stranger without knowing how the need will be received. There were enough negative emotions for this student and others that it felt safer not to approach librarians at the service points. A few other students expressed more deeply their reticence to engage with librarians at CU Boulder in ways that emphasized a sense of exposure in asking for help. For one student, who had attended both a two-year and a four-year institution before transferring to CU Boulder, the chat reference service seemed to be more efficient and to remove some of the vulnerability of initiating an in-person interaction.

Reaching out to peers instead of librarians was often more comfortable for students. A student who had transferred from a small private college and recalled fondly the friendly librarians there described needing help with printing in the library at CU Boulder and reaching out to peers for help, via text message. Later, when asked about advice for new transfer students, the same student responded, “Um, just ask how to print. Don’t try and figure it out for 45 minutes....Not being afraid to ask the person next to you...having the bravery...or having the ability to just sit and talk with someone is exceptionally helpful in making friends and finding out how to do stuff around school.” This example showed the student’s insight and agency in reaching out for help on their new campus, and how the student perceived asking for help from a peer as worth the risk of admitting ignorance.

##### Valuing Staff Support

While a traditional model of college experience focuses on students becoming independent of their families and individualizing as young adults, the Transfer Receptive Culture, informed by CRT, maintains the crucial importance of welcoming students’ families and supporting their family and community ties, rather than distancing them (Jain, Herrera, Bernal, Solorzano, 2011, p. 261). Within the campus context, O’Brien asserts, “social ties” are “interconnected” with transfer students’ integration (O’Brien, 2011, p. 161). Many students shared stories expressing the value they found through supportive connections with library staff at the university level, once overcoming the hesitancy of reaching out to librarians. We observed that students were genuinely interested in connecting with us during and after the interviews. Students often stayed longer to continue conversing and to learn more about the libraries' resources or wanted to walk around with us to better navigate the main library building.

Students expressed a desire to get to know librarians. A computer science student appreciated an introduction to their subject specialist librarian at CU Boulder previously. We were especially moved by an international student who described intense loneliness at the new institution that led to a suicide attempt. The student shared how important it was for librarians and campus staff broadly to engage with students and build relationships, saying, “No, like, *business* talking. Just talk to me, like, as a *human being*.” This advice deeply resonated with us in terms of humanizing our interactions with students, that can lead to friendly relationships and a shared sense of belonging. A student who had attended a small liberal arts college described their academic librarian as being integrated into the campus social networks, “I felt like she was a part of the community as well, especially in a small school like that. She and my adviser, actually were best friends in real life. In their personal lives they were friends and they hung out. So I think I had a sense of it being a more cohesive community versus here.” These examples demonstrate students' experiences of librarians as human beings and reflect students’ desire to be seen fully by librarians.

Several students spoke to their relationships with disciplinary faculty by discussing how their professors act as a gateway to the campus libraries. For example, this student could not recall meaningful conversations with librarians at CU Boulder, other than transactional or circulation interactions, but shared how history faculty had engaged them in library resources and research:

I was taking a Colorado history class. And we went up to the stacks and looked at the old yearbooks for CU Boulder, which I didn't even know they had yearbooks back in the day. That was really fun. So they just kind of show us like ‘Okay, like, here's how you look for books, this is what you type in, here's the numbers, go in the stacks.’

Others, such as one international transfer student, echoed this theme of deep care from faculty who were interested in supporting the students as *people* and supported students’ interests and research projects.

In navigating their new campus broadly, students recognized the importance of relationships with staff and faculty as well as with peers. One student described a staff member in their engineering program who told them “I got you, baby,” in answering questions about navigating the department as a transfer student. For this student, relationships with both staff and peers were a form of transfer capital they recognized as important. Such examples of support and care clearly helped in the transition for transfer students navigating their new campus. Viewing libraries through the lenses of relationships helped the research team understand how students make choices about which spaces to use and in what ways to engage with the people and resources in libraries.

#### Library Spaces

##### Early Fondness & Control

The research team heard a range of experiences describing whether students felt comfortable navigating library spaces or whether they perceived less ownership of library spaces that were (sometimes rigidly) controlled by library staff. This range seems to be reflective of the literature, with articles emphasizing the roles of public and school library spaces in family engagement and social capital through play, delight, and taking care of other family needs, especially for immigrant and low-income communities (Khoir et al., 2017; Lopez et al., 2017; Prendergast, 2016)**.** The shadow side of library spaces has also received more attention in the literature, with questions about whether libraries should “shush” patrons, a school library employee reprimanded for taping students’ mouths shut, and crucial conversations about the role of policing and security within libraries that reinforce systemic racism (Blazer, 2020; Ishizuka, 2004; Pew Research Center, 2013; Robinson, 2019). This range reflects the critical questions being asked within the LIS field about who is welcome, worthy of respect, and has agency within library spaces.

During the interviews, several students shared positive memories of public libraries as children. One student described the public library as their “hang out” and another remembered getting their first library card and signing it. A student who identified as non-traditional and as a first-generation college student described a large children’s section at their public library, “we really loved it... I remember that very fondly.” These two examples indicate a sense of comfort and belonging within public libraries. In a third example, a student who identified as first-generation American and a first-generation college student connected their appreciation for public libraries to internet and computer access, which was not available to them at home and was very limited at school. The student recognized the value of this access as instrumental to them growing up.

In contrast to these positive memories, the same student who described their K-12 librarian as “cringy” and “unhelpful” described the sense of that librarian’s control of the library as “entering her realm.” This description conveys a visceral sense of subordination on entering the school library space, created in part by the librarian. Other students echoed this experience of relationships and spaces influencing each other, when negative or policing interactions with library staff reduced their desire to be in school library spaces. Another student studying geology shared that their high school library was a place for “slacking off” where he and friends would go to socialize and pass time instead of engaging in academic work. This, example, too, suggests library spaces can come with expectations that students wish to subvert for their own purposes.

##### Evolving Use of Academic Libraries

The research team found alignment with Vinyard (2020), where new transfer students described navigating the new campus library as “fearful” and “rough.” We found parallels with Whang et al. who noted UW transfer students were overwhelmed by the number of libraries (Vinyard, 2020, p. 348; Whang et al., 2017, p. 305). For example, a student we interviewed who had attended three institutions before CU Boulder shared their confusion of the larger library system, wondering why there was more than one library on campus. Sadly, some students reported experiences that were overwhelming and scared them away. A student who attended a small liberal arts school prior to CU Boulder said, “I got lost in 100% honesty and then I couldn't get out. Cuz I couldn’t find an exit. So, I didn't come back for, like, two weeks. I was like, ‘I'm never doing that again.’” For some students, these overwhelming perceptions of their new academic library shift as they adjust to the new campus. Harrick and Fullington identified “campus specific knowledge” that the library can offer through a greater presence at orientations and library tours (Harrick & Fullington, 2019, p. 84-85). Whang et al identified a need for new transfer students to become familiar with the library layout, which led to library tours led by returning transfer students (Whang et al, 2017, p. 308).

Students reflected on how their use of library spaces evolved over the course of their higher education journeys, both across institutions, and during their progression within an institution. In this example from a student who transferred to CU Boulder from a large research institution out of state, “My first year, I would do homework there almost every night. But my second year, it was mostly just a place where I would meet people to do group work for classes...I don't think I really checked out any books or anything like that.” Another student noted that during their freshman and sophomore years they used course reserve textbooks for algebra and math as well as loaner laptops in order to study in one of their prior library’s private study rooms. However during their junior year they shifted to using library study rooms for group project work as their computer programming studies evolved and they finally obtained their own laptop. Students’ needs and priorities shift over the course of their academic journey, as does use of different library spaces and services.

When recalling the libraries at their prior institutions, students shared a range of highly positive to neutral or negative memories. A student who had attended both a small, private liberal arts college and a community college described their previous academic library as a social space, “where everything was happening.” Yet other students who had attended both four-year and two-year institutions reported the library at their last institution was too crowded or noisy to use or was “where people went to sleep.” Students had interesting observations when they compared their use of prior institution libraries to CU Boulder libraries, such as feeling their high school library didn’t have as much content to choose from, compared with the perception that their new academic library “is like my dream, there’s so many books here!” We heard this excitement about the current institution’s larger spaces, five campus libraries, and abundance of resources from several students. We also observed that some students seemed to have a fluid perspective on what constitutes a library, which they viewed together with the writing center, tutoring, a learning commons area, or other factors, possibly based on the composition of their previous academic libraries.

##### Primarily a Study Space

Our study concurred with Vinyard at Pepperdine that transfer students considered the library primarily as a study space (Vinyard, 2020, p. 350). This is in contrast to Richter-Weikum and Seeber who noted that students regarded the Metropolitan State University (MSU) of Denver campus library as a place to retrieve physical materials, rather than to study (Richter-Weikum & Seeber, 2018, p. 68). This difference may be due to the different institution types, with MSU Denver established as a commuter campus.

For some CU Boulder students the main library’s location, and the lack of convenient vehicle access to the main library, presented a barrier to using it for study. Others planned their study schedules around chunks of time that they could dedicate to spending at the CU Boulder libraries. Among transfer students who commuted to CU Boulder, we noted parallels with Harrick and Fullington that the library can serve as an intermediary space, especially for students who do not live in dormitories (Harrick & Fullington, 2019, p. 83). A student who reported not using their community college library at all shared that they used their current academic library so frequently that they were at the library “more often than I am at home.” A student with a commute ranging from an hour to two hours explained that the library is, “definitely the best place I can go to -- not having another place... because I can't go home.” These experiences speak to the sense of place and belonging some transfer students felt for CU Boulder libraries, even if they had not had this sense at prior institution libraries.

For some students, viewing the library as a study space rather than a place for information resources or help from librarians may be due to discipline-specific ways of using information. A geology student shared, “I don't really have a need to find physical books all that often, ever... It's all online.” In terms of information resources accessible through the library, some students did use physical books for specific course projects, and others mentioned Google Scholar or more generally using the library databases, with two students (an international affairs and a geology major) mentioning Zotero for citation management by name.

In terms of students’ choice of library study spaces there seemed to be a consensus that, “it depends!” Students reported choosing different spaces depending on what kind of studying they were doing and what type of environment they were looking for, whether quiet, collaborative, near the computers or coffeeshop, or based on other factors. Some students particularly valued the libraries’ social and community spaces, especially with the coffeeshop environment of the main library’s first floor. We were interested to note at least seven students discussed currently using public libraries for resources or study in addition to their academic library.These students described proximity and convenience as factors in choosing public libraries for current use as well as for “clarity of mind” or the atmosphere of public libraries. This finding aligns with Richter-Weikum and Seeber (2018), that students sought other public or academic libraries to study, sometimes in preference over their campus library, because these libraries may be “closer to their home or place of work” (p. 68). Some students vividly associated the CU Boulder libraries with different moods or memories. A student majoring in geology shared, “The math library brings back strong feelings of being extremely stressed and sad, so I don't go down there very much anymore, but yeah, it's like, uh, I can *smell* it.” Another student majoring in computer science explained, “I’d rather be here at [main library]. I just find it more relaxing or peaceful. I don't know. I like bigger libraries.” These examples demonstrate the emotional qualities students associate with library spaces that influence their choices of where and how to interact with these spaces.

### Practical Implications for Libraries

Students candidly gave us feedback on a number of recommendations for libraries to meet transfer students’ needs. Out of the 41 interviewees, only one student had a clear memory of librarians discussing the transferability of research skills or systems to other institutions, saying “we kinda just talked about how all Iowa libraries were connected.” From our prior research (Authors, 2019), this is a major area where both sending and receiving institutions can make clearer parallels between library services, concepts, and tools at their current institution, future academic libraries, and even at public libraries. Receiving libraries can help address the uncertainty that several incoming students expressed regarding library resources and their expressed desire to better navigate those resources. As one student who identified as non-traditional and was majoring in women’s and gender studies phrased it, “I think that there *are* resources. I feel like I skipped them, and I want to go back.” Thus, as the LIS literature has demonstrated, there is a need for library offerings of tours, orientations, and workshops for transfer students to learn what is available through their new institution’s library.

In terms of library instruction and relationships, three students, all of whom had been at CU Boulder for at least three semesters, specifically wanted librarians to come and introduce themselves in class. Active learning techniques involving group work or live workshopping of students’ topics seemed to be more vivid for students with past library instruction experiences. However, some students indicated they were getting duplication in library instruction and were sometimes frustrated by the repetition. A student who transferred from a large commuter campus candidly shared, “It did feel like there was some overlap. I think that when it is targeted, though it can be really meaningful.” Many other students reported no library instruction at all in K-12 or their former colleges. Recognizing this lack of instruction and connection with librarians, one student shared a desire for librarians to come to their history class and introduce themselves and the resources.

We recognize that programming is an important potential way of engaging with library spaces, resources, and library staff. The research team has experimented with a transfer picnic, a behind-the-scenes library tour for transfer students, and some variations on these activities (Authors, 2019). However, only eight students of 41 reported having heard of our transfer-specific library events, which speaks to challenges of communicating with transfer students. This raises nuanced questions about students’ preferences for transfer-specific activities. We heard that transfer-specific activities were important to some students, compared with others who found the salience of their transfer student identity faded after a couple of semesters at their new institution. This is interesting given research from UC Berkeley that found 36 out of 263 transfer students surveyed had concealed their transfer student status from peers and 56 students experienced rejection based on their transfer status (Alexander et al., 2009, pp. 5–6). The nuance of identity and belonging as they relate to transfer students’ identities are an area for ongoing research and changes in practice. When asked about attending future library events for transfer students most non-traditional and commuter students preferred a skills-based event over a social event from the libraries. Almost all students said email was the best way to reach them, but some acknowledged they do not always check their campus email. Three students suggested that including “transfer” in the subject line would help get their attention and was a factor they noticed from our interview recruitment emails.

These examples of libraries functioning as a “home base” for transfer students who commute suggests that libraries need to consider students who work, and avoid offering programs, services, or events only on one day or time per week. One student voiced that it really helped them when libraries were open late. Another student studying international affairs who identified as non-traditional specifically mentioned the high cost of textbooks, with course reserves being a valued library offering. Students referenced specific services they reported using in library spaces, whether at CU Boulder or previous academic libraries. The high number of specific mentions of study rooms (n=15) and coffee shops (n=9) inside campus libraries again demonstrates the importance of libraries as a campus study and socialization space for transfer students, in addition to other student populations. Finally, as mentioned in the relationships section, students shared examples of passionate professors connecting them with libraries and often providing library instruction within the classroom context. This emphasizes the importance of librarians connecting with disciplinary faculty to build relationships with transfer students (and all students).

### Limitations

The study limitations included the interview setting inside library buildings, which may have primed students or subjected their replies to social desirability bias (Spector, 2004). Additionally, the research team wondered, ‘how did the White female-presenting characteristics of the interviewers impact the interviews and interact with students’ perceptions and prior experiences of librarians?’ In choosing to participate, some students may have engaged in selection bias because they are already library users or supporters. Finally, following constructivist methods, we acknowledge researcher subjectivity (Charmaz, 2014, p. 17; Hershberg, 2014, p. 5); all of the research team has worked with transfer students for a number of years and our past experiences and views filter our experience of the research process. Rather than aiming for objectivity or neutrality as interviewers, the research team members were often creating shared meaning and understanding alongside student participants, as part of the social and relational nature of learning (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14; Hershberg, 2014, p. 5).

### Conclusion

In addition to these practical findings, this study identified important themes around transfer students’ identities, relationships associated with libraries, and perceptions of library spaces. The interviews allowed us to explore students’ library journeys as well as their adjustment on campus. Memory, emotion, and nostalgia were embedded in students’ library experiences. Students clearly remembered and connected libraries with past feelings that may influence their future use (or lack of use) of library resources, spaces, and librarians. This research is part of a growing qualitative movement to understand transfer student experiences more holistically. Among LIS literature at the time of writing, this project was unique in the number of transfer students interviewed, and the composition of the sample with about half in their first semester after transferring and about half with two or more semesters at CU Boulder. Qualitative research has much more to offer in understanding the nuances of transfer students’ experiences with libraries and at different institution types. The authors suggest library staff continue to engage in action research to better understand transfer student experiences on their own campuses. Future research would benefit from longitudinal, mixed methods, and multi-site studies with libraries and transfer students. Studies that include collaboration across sending and receiving institution libraries would provide a more complete understanding of the opportunities and challenges of supporting transfer students in academic libraries.

The research team appreciated the time and engagement of the students we interviewed, who offered much insight regarding how academic libraries can support transfer students. These interviews have already informed CU Boulder programming changes with transfer students. Librarians have begun offering library instruction to incoming transfer students each semester as part of a freshmen seminar program with sections specifically for transfer students. The authors piloted a librarian-facilitated dialogue with a class of transfer students in the College of Engineering & Applied Sciences in fall 2020 as another form of engagement and community building. Outside of classes, the authors offered library workshops, tours, and social events for transfer students as part of orientation programming in fall semester from 2017-2021 (Authors, 2019). More broadly, campus efforts to better meet transfer student needs include a transfer student success committee convened with membership from across campus (including the authors) in 2019. This group completed recommendations to campus administration that have led to funding transfer programs and a student affairs position focused exclusively on relationship building among transfer students. This cross-campus effort has led to ongoing partnerships between libraries staff and other campus units, such as a committee focusing on transfer student sense of belonging and programming initiatives; membership spans student affairs, disciplinary faculty, and the Libraries and meets bi-weekly.

These findings and prior literature emphasize the need for receiving institutions to work collaboratively with sending institutions to build “transfer receptive cultures” that centralize the experiences of students who are holding multiple identities, commuting, caregiving, and working (Jain et al., 2011). There is a need for traditional campuses such as CU Boulder to incorporate these aspects as central for student well-being, rather than peripheral. We see the need to open our doors wider to all of the identities and experiences of our students.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

#### Choice of Institution, Transition, Identities

1. Where did you first attend college?
   1. What was that like?
   2. Did you have a major? If so, what was it?
2. Did you come directly to CU Boulder from your first college?
   1. If not, where else did you attend school?
   2. Did you take time off of school? What was that like?
3. What influenced your choice to transfer to CU Boulder?
   1. What were you looking for that was different from prior institutions you attended?
   2. What were your priorities when thinking about transferring
4. What has been most **helpful** to you in your transition to CU Boulder (e.g. family or friend support networks, personal strengths, campus resources)?
   1. Follow-up: Work responsibilities? Family responsibilities? Commute?
5. What have you found **challenging** about transferring to CU Boulder?
   1. Follow-up: Work responsibilities? Family responsibilities? Commute?
6. What does success look like to you as a student?
   1. Follow-up: Has this changed at your new institution?
7. Do you think of yourself as a “transfer student?”
   1. What does being a “transfer student” mean to you?
   2. If not, have you transferred credits? What was that like?
8. Do you know any other transfer students on campus?
   1. If so, how did you meet the other transfer students you know?
9. Would you like to share any other aspects of who you are? (can refer to demographic form for reference)

#### Experiences with Libraries

1. Did you have experience with libraries growing up?
   1. If so, can you describe?
   2. Can you describe your high school library/librarian?
2. What experiences have you had with the academic library at your previous institution(s)?
   1. How comfortable/uncomfortable did you feel in the academic library?
      1. Interacting with resources?
      2. With library staff?
   2. Do you currently use or visit academic, public, or K-12 libraries besides the CU Boulder Libraries?
   3. Did librarians at your sending institution discuss using the library after transfer?
3. What was your first impression of the libraries at CU Boulder?
4. How have you interacted with CU Boulder Libraries so far?
   1. What has been your experience with academic librarians?
   2. Have you had a library instruction session where your class met with a librarian?
   3. Have you met with a librarian at your previous institution(s)?
      1. In a class? Outside of a class?
   4. Can you think of a particularly **positive** experience you have had with CU Boulder Libraries?
   5. Have you had any **frustrating** experiences with the Libraries at CU Boulder? or what could be improved?
5. The CU Boulder Libraries has been hosting some transfer-specific outreach events in the past two years.
   1. Have you attended any of these?
   2. If so, what was that like?
   3. How did you hear about them?
   4. Where would you like to hear about events?
6. What additional support or services would you like from the University Libraries at CU Boulder?

#### Campus Experience

1. Can you tell us about a recent assignment you completed that required outside sources or looking up additional information?
   1. Follow-up: How did you approach the assignment?
   2. Where did you look for information?
   3. Can you tell us about a time when you were excited about learning something? Or felt strong curiosity?
2. How can campus staff or departments help transfer students transition to CU Boulder?
3. What advice would you give incoming transfer students?
4. Is there anything else we didn’t ask about that you would like us to know?

## Appendix B

Demographic Form

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Academic Standing :

Freshman | Sophomore | Junior | Senior | Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Number of semesters at CU Boulder:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Major (if declared): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Please list previous higher education institution(s) you have attended : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What race(s)/ethnicities do you most identify with? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Enrollment Status: Full time | Part time
5. Do you identify with any of the following?
   1. Non-traditional student Y/N
   2. Born outside of the United States Y/N
   3. First generation American Y/N
   4. First generation college student Y/N
   5. Student with a disability Y/N
   6. Student veteran Y/N
6. How long is your commute to campus? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you currently employed? If so, please circle all that apply:

Full time | Part time | On-Campus | Off-Campus

Do you want to receive results of the research? Y/N

Is there anything else about yourself you would like us to know?