Patterns and Perceptions of Academic Librarian Deference Behavior: A Mixed Methods Study

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

PATTERNS AND PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN
DEFERENCE BEHAVIOR: A MIXED METHODS STUDY

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Lyda Fontes McCartin

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Leadership, Policy, and Development:
Higher Education and P-12 Education
Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

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This Dissertation by: Lyda Fontes McCartin

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has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in Department of Leadership, Policy, and Development: Higher Education and P-12 Education, Program of Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

____________________________________________________
Tamara Yakaboski, Ph.D., Research Advisor

____________________________________________________
Kim Black, Ph.D., Committee Member

____________________________________________________
Mark Smith, Ph.D., Committee Member

____________________________________________________
Randy Larkins, Ph.D., Faculty Representative

____________________________________________________
Cindy Wesley, Ph.D.
Interim Associate Provost and Dean
Graduate School and International Admissions
Literature on academic librarians has indicated that academic librarians take a subservient role to disciplinary faculty and defer to disciplinary faculty in the context of information literacy instruction regardless of their own expertise (Downey, 2016; Julien & Pecoskie, 2009). This deferential relationship has not been explored in any meaningful way; thus, the behavior that is most negatively influencing librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships has been disregarded. The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore academic librarian deference behavior in order to understand how the behavior manifests. Specifically, this study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design with the participant selection variant, which allowed for the first quantitative phase of the study to be used to purposefully sample for the second qualitative phase. This study used Cunningham’s (2012) Theory of Paradoxes and the Potential for Play as the guiding theoretical framework to study the work of academic librarians and the role of deference behavior in their work. In the first phase, 139 teaching-focused academic librarians working at 4-year institutions in the United States participated in the Academic Librarian Behavior Survey. Results from the survey were used to determine the participants for the qualitative phase. Twelve academic librarians participated in the second phase, which consisted of two online focus group interviews as well as two writing prompts and a
member check. During these interviews and reflection opportunities, the participants discussed their work in academic libraries, their relationships with disciplinary faculty, and the role of deference behavior in their professional work. Findings from the study were presented within four themes that suggest that institutional culture and emotional stressors in academic librarians’ work lead to deference behavior but that the underlying causes of deference behavior in academic librarians are poor library leadership and poor education and training for academic librarians. Implications of the findings offer suggestions for improving library graduate education and academic librarian onboarding and professional development. This study is significant for teaching-focused academic librarians at all levels of their career but especially for middle managers leading library instruction programs.
DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my pack, who waited patiently--let’s go do the thing.

And to the librarians--be bold!
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The feminization of librarianship began in the late 19th century and was solidified by 1910 (Garrison, 1977). It was the process of feminization, not the actions of women librarians, that shaped the profession. The social standing of women in the 1900s meant that the sphere of influence for libraries and librarians was small. Because women dominated library work, the social expectations of women became the professional expectations of librarians. Traditional ideals of feminine behavior held by the public shaped a “non-assertive, non-professional code of service” (Garrison, 1977, p. 16) and led to the image of the librarian as dependent and submissive (Dickinson, 2003; Radford & Radford, 1997; P. Wilson, 1982). Library education was built around the training of women. Consequently, it never became intellectual, never developed a theoretical grounding, but remained skill-based (Garrison, 1977; Hopkins, 1982; Shiflett, 1981). Public perceptions of librarians and negative perceptions of library education followed librarians into higher education as women filled positions in academic libraries. These perceptions greatly affected librarians in higher education. They facilitated minoritization, the “process of minority status being socially constructed in a specific societal context” (Benitez, 2010, p. 131), which removed academic librarians from any significant educational role on campus (Hopkins, 1982). This led to the perception that academic librarians are not legitimate members of the academy (Griffin, 2013).
I joined the library profession in 2005. My education focused on traditional library service, requiring courses in reference service and cataloging. Courses on pedagogy and research were not offered in my program; I sought a graduate assistantship in the library instruction department at my institution to ensure that I received training in information literacy teaching. It was not until beginning a doctoral program in Education nine years later that I received any education in research methods. I was a library faculty member for 13 years, moving through the ranks to full professor. I am a scholar in my field, having published and presented nationally and internationally on information literacy practice. In the last four years I supervised faculty librarians and oversaw an information literacy program in an academic library, working closely with librarians who teach.

Over the past few years I noticed a theme of subservience and submissiveness emerging in my conversations with academic librarians when they discussed their working relationships with disciplinary faculty. Last year, I spoke with an academic librarian about a library instruction session that she taught for a faculty member in the business school. She was frustrated because she felt she was not covering the right content, but she continued because it was content requested by the business faculty member. I asked several questions in hopes of discovering the rationale for continuing with an ineffective lesson plan. Ultimately, she said that since the other faculty member had a Ph.D. and it was his class, she did what he wanted. She seemed concerned by her lack of credentials, indicating acknowledgement of the perceived deficiency in library education as well as the belief that academic librarians are somehow less than the faculty they work alongside. This interaction also illustrates subservience to male colleagues,
which is not just a concern for librarians but for many women faculty in higher education (Williams, 2004).

Soon after, another librarian mentioned that she had created a 25-minute instructional video for a nursing class. Noticing the odd look on my face, she quickly added, “I know that isn’t best practice, but that’s what the faculty asked for.” This interaction illustrates subservience despite librarian expertise and knowledge. More recently, a different librarian was discussing an online module she created for students to complete before coming to a library workshop. The librarian revealed that the faculty member she was working with created a quiz for the modules without communicating with the librarian about the intended learning outcomes for the curriculum. When I asked if she spoke with the faculty member about giving feedback on the quiz questions, the librarian said she was not comfortable questioning the faculty member. I view these submissive actions by academic librarians revealed during these conversations as examples of academic librarian deference behavior.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the problem of academic librarian deference behavior and the significance of putting the behavior under study. I introduce significant key terms that will be used throughout the study in order to provide context for the reader. I then present a statement of the problem, discuss the purpose of the study, provide a brief overview of the study, and discuss its significance to higher education research and practice. I conclude with an overview of the remaining chapters.

**Key Terms**

The following terms are important to the study, and knowing the definitions of these key terms will help contextualize the research. These terms include academic
librarian, liaison librarian, instruction librarian, teaching-focused librarian, disciplinary faculty, information literacy, course-integrated instruction, deference behavior, and minoritization.

**Academic Librarian**

An academic librarian is a librarian who works in a library on a college or university campus, including community colleges. There are different types of librarians within an academic library; the most common librarian types are reference librarian, instruction librarian, liaison librarian, technical services librarian, and e-resources librarian. This study focuses on instruction and liaison librarians as these are the most teaching-focused library positions within the academic library.

As of 2017, the library profession was 79.0% women (Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO [DPE], 2018), a decrease from 82.0% in 2010 (Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO [DPE], 2011). Despite the high percentage of women in the profession, in 2010 men held 40.0% of all academic library administrative positions (DPE, 2011). Over 86% of librarians in 2017 were white, non-Hispanic. For librarians of color in 2017, only 6.4% were Black or African American. Hispanic or Latino librarians made up 10.4% of the profession, and 5.2% were Asian (DPE, 2018). Library graduate programs continue to be dominated by women; 80.0% of Master of Library Sciences (MLS) program enrollment in 2014-2015 was women. Of these, only 7.2% were women of color. Pay inequities also exist in library work, despite women outnumbering men in the profession. Women earned 28% less than men in the profession in 2017 with women of color earning even less (70% and 64% for African American and Hispanic women respectively; DPE, 2018).
Liaison Librarian

A liaison librarian supports one or more academic programs on campus. For example, an academic librarian may be a liaison to one department, such as Economics, or liaison to an entire college such as a college of education. A liaison librarian’s responsibilities can include the traditional reference service of answering student and faculty questions, meeting with students for a research consultation, and curating book and electronic database collections. Liaisons may also teach students through course-integrated instruction. The key to a liaison librarian’s success is building relationships with disciplinary faculty.

Instruction Librarian

Teaching in the academic library includes credit-bearing information literacy courses and course-embedded instruction. Depending on the structure of an academic library, individual liaisons may do a lot of teaching. However, in some libraries, dedicated instruction librarians, whose primary responsibility is teaching, do most of the teaching in the library.

Teaching-Focused Librarian

A teaching-focused librarian is a librarian whose role is heavily teaching oriented. Liaison librarians may consider themselves teaching-focused librarians if they do a lot of teaching. This study seeks to bring together self-identified teaching-focused librarians regardless of job title.

Disciplinary Faculty

Faculty in the disciplines are typically referred to as teaching faculty. However, I use the term disciplinary faculty purposefully to distinguish traditional teaching faculty
from library faculty. Many librarians teach; thus, to use the term teaching faculty in reference to non-library faculty denies the librarian teaching role.

**Information Literacy**

Information literacy is “the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning” (Association of College & Research Libraries [ACRL], 2016, p. 3). Academic librarian teaching is focused on information literacy.

**Course-Integrated Instruction**

Course-integrated instruction, as opposed to credit course instruction, is when a librarian embeds information literacy into a course taught by a disciplinary faculty member. Librarians may integrate in one or more class sessions during a semester. Course-integrated instruction is the most common type of teaching for academic librarians and is typically referred to as one-shot instruction.

**Deference Behavior**

Deference behavior is the act of yielding your own “preferences, wishes, desires, wants, or principles to those of another person or group” (Silverstein, 2013, p. 16). Deference is discussed as a form of communication (Fragale, Sumanth, Tiedens, & Northcraft, 2012; Goffman, 1956). Early writing on deference behavior from Sociologist Erving Goffman (1956) discussed deference behavior as a symbolic action that indicated a person’s relationship to another; deference was used by those of low status toward those of higher status. Recent business literature discusses lateral deference, deferring to a
person of similar rank or status, as the most common form of deference in organizations (Fragale et al., 2012).

**Minoritization**

Benitez (2010) introduced the term minoritization in a discussion of resituating cultural centers within a social justice framework. Benitez used the term minoritized instead of minority to move from the passive to the action or the process of minority status being socially constructed in a specific societal context. His choice in using the term minoritization “assumes that there is a history of structural and institutional actions that have over time limited access to, and led to a lack of presence among, students of color in higher education labeled as racially and ethnically different from the norm” (p. 131). To put this in the context of academic librarians, there is a history of structural and institutional, and even societal, actions and perceptions that have over time limited access to and led to a lack of presence among academic librarians in higher education. Throughout the study, the phrase minoritized faculty refers to women, women of color, and men of color who hold faculty positions.

**Statement of the Problem**

Deference behavior “is when one makes a choice or acts by yielding [their] own preferences, wishes, desires, wants, or principles to those of another person or group” (Silverstein, 2013, p. 16). Examples of deference behavior exhibited by academic librarians are noted in the library literature. In a 2009 study exploring the experiences of academic librarians’ teaching roles, Julien and Pecoskie described the librarians in their study as ceding “power, authority, and knowledge of curriculum to the teaching faculty” (p. 151) when planning course-integrated library instruction sessions. In a 2016 study of
critical information literacy, Downey observed that all the librarians she interviewed “deferred to faculty goals for information literacy sessions, even if the professor had a limited or outdated understanding of the current information environment” (p. 99). People exhibiting deference behavior are perceived as being “submissive” and “agreeable” (Fragale et al., 2012, p. 374), characteristics that align with the stereotypical image of librarians (Dickinson, 2003; Form, 1946; P. Wilson, 1982). The submissive actions by my library colleagues presented earlier seem to be expressions of deference behavior.

Early research on deference indicated that deference was exhibited by someone of a lower status to someone of a higher status, which defined deference as a function of rank (Goffman, 1956; Rushing, 1962). More recent research into organizational deference suggests that the most common form of deference in the workplace is “lateral deference,” which is when deference is expressed to someone of “equal or similar status” (Fragale et al., 2012, p. 378). Lateral deference is present in higher education. Literature suggests that faculty of color, especially women faculty of color, defer to white and male peers as a way to survive the tenure process (Hinton, 2010; Shrake, 2006). There are also accounts in the literature of junior faculty deferring to more senior faculty through their own silence in department meetings (Urrieta, Méndez, & Rodríguez, 2015; Young, Anderson, & Stewart, 2015). We also see lateral deference in minoritized faculty who quietly take on more service responsibilities than their white or male colleagues (Delgado-Romero, Flores, Gloria, Arredondo, & Castellanos, 2003; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Hune, 1997; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Turner, 2002). Fragale et al. (2012) claimed that deference may be used as a “status-saving strategy, preventing individuals
from losing status and rank” (p. 376); thus, its use among junior and minoritized faculty in higher education is not surprising.

Fragale et al. (2012) also argued that lateral deference is “most frequent among those communicators who are most concerned with maintaining their status positions” (p. 375). Academic librarians are “endlessly justifying their professional role in educational institutions” due to their constrained public image (Loesch, 2017, p. 32), which is seen through the century-long debate within the library profession about academic librarian faculty status (Association of College & Research Libraries, 1975; Knapp, 1959; McEwan, 1941; Sawtelle, 1878). The historical fight for faculty rank indicates that academic librarians are certainly concerned with gaining and maintaining status (Leigh & Sewny, 1960). Academic librarians may be justifying their position through lateral deference behavior (Fragale et al., 2012), trying to win favor through a position of subservience (Badke, 2005).

Deference may also be “a strategic behavior aimed at establishing and maintaining relationships with others reluctant to do so” (Jourdan, Durand, & Thornton, 2017, p. 234). Literature suggests that, across disciplines, traditional faculty do not see academic librarians as their peers, even when librarians hold faculty status (Hardesty, 1995; Holbrook, 1968; Ivey, 1994; Kempcke, 2002; Oberg, Schleiter, & Van Houten, 1989; Pagowsky & DeFrain, 2014). How disciplinary faculty may perceive academic librarians, and because teaching-focused librarians rely on relationships with disciplinary faculty to be successful in their work, means that academic librarians “seldom operate from a position of strength in their relationships with faculty” (Hardesty, 1995, p. 361).
The desire to maintain relationships with disciplinary faculty may lead to academic librarian deference behavior.

Perhaps a consequence of minoritization of academic librarians, the teaching focused librarians in Downey’s (2016) study shared feelings of “being lesser than” faculty (p. 131) and of not “overstepping their reach” (p. 162) in their interactions with faculty. These librarians were “reluctant to be seen as intruding on faculty territory” (p. 129). Librarians in Downey’s (2016) study seemed “resigned to this reality” (p. 99), indicating that deference behavior may lead to negative self-perceptions and a lack of job satisfaction. Both Julien and Pecoskie (2009) and Downey (2016) described the deferential stance taken by librarians in their interactions with disciplinary faculty. Unfortunately, they did not explore these findings in any meaningful way and, therefore, have overlooked the behavior that is most negatively influencing librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships.

Deference behavior is a catch-22 for academic librarians; if we continue to establish and maintain relationships with disciplinary faculty through deference behavior, we may very well fail to attain a significant role in the educational process of our institutions (Chiste, Glover, & Westwood, 2000). When teaching-focused academic librarians defer our own teaching goals to those of the disciplinary faculty regardless of our own pedagogical expertise, our work on campus becomes undervalued. Deference behavior creates a cycle where faculty do not see information literacy as a priority and limits teaching-focused librarians’ opportunities to integrate information literacy into the curriculum. This should concern academic librarians, and higher education more broadly, as information literacy is a set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that employers say
they want in the graduates they hire (Raish & Rimland, 2016). Additionally, a lack of information literacy skills helps to create a second level digital divide wherein access is provided with no ability for graduates to navigate information systems (Hargittai, 2002). Furthermore, if academic librarians continue to play a minimal role in the educational mission, higher education may decide that professional librarians are no longer necessary, a trend we are currently seeing in secondary education in the United States (American Library Association, 2014; Breaux, 2019) and Great Britain (U.K. School Librarian Sarah Pavey, personal communication, 2016).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore academic librarian deference behavior in order to understand how the behavior manifests. For this study I used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design with the participant selection variant, meaning that the first quantitative phase of the study was used to purposefully sample for the second qualitative phase. The research was guided by the “Multiple Paradigm Thesis” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 99), wherein different worldviews are utilized in the different phases of a sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, post-positivism guided the first quantitative phase, and constructivism guided the second qualitative (emphasized) phase.

The theoretical framework that informed this research is Cunningham’s (2012) Grounded Theory of Paradoxes and the Potential for Play. Cunningham (2012) theorized that librarians experience multiple tensions in their work that are created by their marginalized role on campus. Exploring academic librarian deference behavior through the lens of the Grounded Theory of Paradoxes and the Potential for Play may provide
insight into why academic librarians employ deference behavior in their work. Exploring how academic librarians navigate their relationships with disciplinary faculty, and the role deference behavior may play in these relationships, is important for developing strategies that teaching focused librarians can use to be successful in higher education organizations.

Research Questions

The study was guided by an overarching mixed methods questions, one quantitative question, and three qualitative questions. The overarching mixed methods question guiding the study was:

Q1 How does deference behavior manifest in the work of teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States?

The Phase One quantitative question was:

Q1a What are the patterns of deference behavior in teaching-focused librarians?

The Phase Two qualitative questions were:

Q1b What factors influence librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships?

Q1c How do teaching-focused librarians negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty?

Q1d What are the underlying causes of academic librarian deference behavior?

Significance of the Study

In their 2012 systematic review of the literature on librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships, Phelps and Campbell found that most of the articles exploring the relationship discuss the activities that took place during librarian-disciplinary faculty interactions but provide no analysis of the relationship itself. While helpful for library practitioners, Phelps and Campbell called for research that focuses on relationship issues
between librarians and disciplinary faculty as an avenue of research that will benefit the larger academic community. My study builds on the literature exploring librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships in higher education by focusing on an issue--the manifestation of deference behavior in the work of teaching-focused academic librarians. This research has implications for practice, library education, and research.

**Practice**

Exploring academic librarian deference behavior will bring the behavior into the consciousness of teaching-focused librarians. Understanding how and why deference behavior manifests will better equip teaching-focused librarians to work with disciplinary faculty and build equal partnerships in the classroom. This research will also help middle-managers in academic libraries who supervise teaching-focused librarians in recognizing deference behavior and developing interventions to realign librarians’ thinking about their role on campus. These interventions will lead to increased job satisfaction and employee retention. Finally, this research may improve student outcomes around information literacy, as librarians will be better able to articulate and achieve goals as partners with disciplinary faculty rather than working in a support-only role.

**Library Education**

Future librarians going into public and academic librarianship receive the same education even though the positions and organizations are different. This research may help to improve library education for future academic librarians, especially teaching-focused librarians. Findings from this research may indicate some areas where education for students wanting to pursue academic librarianship is lacking, such as pedagogy, management, communication, and higher education practice. Additions to an academic
librarian track in graduate education may lead graduates to a better understanding of the academic librarians’ role on campus and better prepare new librarians to successfully navigate higher education structures. Changes in library education may lead to better trained academic librarians as well as better onboarding for new librarians and better career development.

**Research**

This research answers the call of Phelps and Campbell (2012) to explore actual relationship issues between academic librarians and disciplinary faculty. This research moves discussions in the library literature from research about how people think about and treat academic librarians to how academic librarians act in response to others. This research opens avenues for exploration into other faculty groups who experience feelings of being lesser than, including contingent faculty and non-Ph.D. tenure-track faculty such as Art faculty whose terminal degree is a Master of Fine Arts (MFA). These faculty come to campus with years of practice as professional artists but are not necessarily accepted as full members of the academy because they lack a doctoral degree (Assistant Professor Mark Dineen, personal communication, March 23, 2019). Additionally, this study may drive future research into deference behavior of other campus positions seen as supportive to the academic mission of an institution such as deference behavior in student affairs practitioners.

As there are other groups on campus that experience minoritization, this research expands the discussion of minoritization from traditionally minoritized identities, such as women and people of color, to occupational groups that experience minoritization within an organizational structure.
Overview of Chapters

In this chapter, I stated the research problem and provided a brief overview of the research study. In Chapter II, I discuss the history of academic libraries, academic hierarchies, and the stereotypes of minoritized faculty and academic librarians and the implications of these stereotypes in higher education. I also discuss deference behavior in higher education and how deference behavior impedes academic librarians’ ability to answer the calls for enhancing the role of academic librarians on campus and how deference behavior impedes action. Chapter II concludes with a discussion of the theoretical framework that informed the study. In Chapter III I present the study methods and methodology, expand the discussion of the worldviews that situated the research, and discuss my researcher stance. I present the research findings and answers to the research questions in Chapter IV. In Chapter V I provide a discussion of the findings and revisit the theoretical framework.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically librarians in higher education have not played a significant role in the campus’ educational mission. As the profession became feminized and more women librarians came to campus, the societal stereotypes about librarians followed. Stereotypes “represent the traits that we view as characteristic of social groups, or of individual members of those groups, and particularly those that differentiate groups from each other” (Stangor, 2016, p. 4). These traits create “mental pictures of the groups in question” (Stangor, 2016, p. 4). For librarians, these stereotypes include meekness and subservience (Form, 1946) as well as perceptions that academic librarians are less intelligent than disciplinary faculty (Alwan, Doan, & Garcia, 2018). Librarian stereotypes brought into higher education have facilitated the process of minoritization of academic librarians and have negatively influenced relationships between librarians and disciplinary faculty.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of the history of academic libraries followed by a discussion of the hierarchies in higher education. The discussion of hierarchies centers a discussion of minoritized groups in higher education including minoritized faculty, contingent faculty (also a minoritized group on campus), and academic librarians. I relate the experiences of academic librarians to those of minoritized faculty as a way to situate academic librarians in higher education. Academic librarians are not always considered in conversations about higher education, but their experiences are similar to
minoritized faculty experiences, and librarians are themselves a minoritized group on campus. I discuss minoritized faculty and academic librarians to show the similar experiences of these groups in order to show that minoritization can be occupation-based within an organization as the organization acts as a microcosm of society.

Next, I present a discussion of the stereotypes of minoritized faculty and the implications of these stereotypes followed by an in-depth discussion of the librarian stereotype and its implications for academic librarians in higher education in order to reveal part of the process of minoritization as societal perceptions permeating higher education. While higher education is seen as an ivory tower disconnected from society, “academe is just another workplace” and as such “is not immune from gender [or racial] stereotyping” (Williams, 2004, p. 20). Stereotypes of minoritized groups operate inside higher education departments and classrooms (Lester, 2008; Lugo-Lugo, 2012; Mayuzumi, 2008; Williams, 2004). Following a discussion of stereotypes, I discuss deference behavior in higher education and how deference behavior impedes acting on calls for enhancing the role of academic librarians on campus. I conclude with a discussion of the theoretical framework that informed the study.

History of Academic Libraries

Growth and Library Instruction

In the colonial era, academic libraries began as small collections that housed classic texts, bibles, and language textbooks to support a theological curriculum (Atkins, 1991). A faculty member, sometimes the college president, led these libraries on a part-time basis, and the most important role for the librarian was protection of the books (Atkins, 1991). Libraries were seen as a “fringe interest” for numerous reasons: (a)
limited books were being printed making books expensive, (b) limited resources meant little money was spent on library collections, and (c) the library was seen as a place of reference and “not an active force in the education of students” (Atkins, 1991, p. 9). Because the library supported only a classical curriculum, students in the 1800s formed literary societies and built society-run libraries with books that interested them. While not officially part of the institution, colleges tended to count these volumes in their total library holdings (Atkins, 1991), indicating that even at that time the size of a library collection was important.

The professors who staffed libraries on a part-time basis were naturally inclined to teach students about the library (Hopkins, 1982). They began teaching students how to work with library resources and about research methods in the students’ field of study. Multiple courses on the library were taught at Oberlin from 1899-1927 (Hopkins, 1982). In 1886, the Cornell librarian claimed it was “the duty of a college library to teach the student how he may . . . seek out and use the books that have displaced or carried along the knowledge of his college days” and “to reveal to the student the fact that no professor’s word is final” (Woodruff as cited by Hopkins, 1982, p. 193). It was these early part-time librarians, themselves faculty at the institution, who began to argue for faculty status for trained librarians at U.S. colleges and universities, citing the teaching role as well as the needed intellectual engagement with students and faculty that warranted rank (Hopkins, 1982).

**The Modern Library**

College libraries grew at the turn of the century as the German model of higher education took over and “prestige associated with research was indicative of a quality
The shift to hiring faculty with doctorate degrees, along with the shift to publication as a requirement for promotion, led to significant changes in academic libraries (Shiflett, 1981). The new research requirements meant that the library needed more materials to support research, so libraries received more money to support these endeavors. Additionally, scholarly monographs and journals were created so that researchers could publish their work (Shiflett, 1981). At the same time, there was a shift from the recitation model of teaching to the lecture and seminar model, which meant that students needed access to supplemental texts. The increased demand for materials from both faculty and students meant that libraries had to provide more access to those materials, so heavy restrictions on who could access library collections weakened in the early part of the 20th century (Atkins, 1991).

Because institutional prestige was associated with library size, university administrators believed that they needed large libraries to attract quality faculty and students (Atkins, 1991; Shiflett, 1981). Students and faculty at various institutions petitioned for better libraries; libraries now had to collect both primary and secondary sources to be deemed adequate (Shiflett, 1981). Library growth slowed during World War II but expanded again after the war with the expansion of science and engineering materials. There was a post-war boom in library construction which continued into the 1960s with the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963; the legislation funded 605 library building projects (Atkins, 1991).

**Feminization**

In the late 19th century, there was growth of both public and academic libraries. Librarianship became a new, fast growing field needing “low-paid but educated recruits”
so educated women who could be employed more cheaply than men were recruited heavily. The boom in libraries began the feminization of libraries; by 1910 almost 80% of library workers were women (Garrison, 1977). Feminization impacted librarianship as a whole with women filling the majority of library positions in both public and academic libraries. The low pay of librarians exploited women workers but was touted as a liberal concession to women in America at a time when women in Europe were being barred from library service (Garrison, 1977). Due to the social role of women at the time, women librarians did not fight about equal pay. The 12 women attending the 1876 American Library Association (ALA) meeting continued this social expectation by setting “a submissive tone” for women in the profession that would continue into the 1970s (Garrison, 1977, p. 13).

Until Garrison’s (1977) seminal work on the feminization of librarianship, few histories of libraries centered the role of women in shaping library work. Garrison (1977) argued that women’s dominance in libraries shaped the “inferior and precarious status of the public library as a cultural resource and caused it to evolve into a marginal kind of public amusement” (p. 11). According to Garrison, librarianship’s inferior status emerged because, as more women joined the library workforce, librarianship adjusted to fit the narrow sphere of allowable women’s activities. The library literature of the time began to describe ideal libraries as places that “would offer the warmth and hospitality of the home to its patrons” (Garrison, 1977, p. 12). The ideal librarian was cast as “the accommodating and heartily receptive hostess” (Garrison, 1977, p. 12). The argument for inviting more women into library jobs was that “women would not feel humiliated by
serving, by playing in the library the part they played in the home” (Garrison, 1977, p. 12).

**Impact of feminization on library education and academic libraries.** Library leaders, who were all men, wanted librarianship to take a position of community leadership and intellectual authority (Garrison, 1977). However, library education was not set up for librarians to answer their call. Melville Dewey opened the first library school at Columbia in 1877 to provide a needed female workforce (Garrison, 1977). Admission standards were low, with some library schools not requiring a college degree (Shiflett, 1981). Library school curriculum focused on technical skills and acculturation rather than having any kind of theoretical basis (Garrison, 1977; Hopkins, 1982; Shiflett, 1981). There was a call for more formalized curriculum and higher admission standards through the 1923 Williamson Report, which laid the foundation for significant improvements in library education (Williamson, 1923). The profession heeded Williamson’s advice, and in 1928 the first Graduate Library School opened at the University of Chicago (Danton, 1946). By the late 1940s there were 32 accredited library schools in the U.S.; 21 of those required a college degree for entrance, but only five offered master’s level work (Danton, 1946). The University of Chicago’s Library School paved the way for the modern graduate degree, the Master of Library Science (MLS).

Despite improvements, there was still concern that library schools provided low-quality education (Hoole, 1943; McAnnally, 1975; L. S. Thompson, 1952). Garrison (1977) argued that library education remained underdeveloped because of the female majority entering library schools. Library education has been consistently criticized for being of “low-intellectual quality” (Atkins, 1991, p. 19), and the profession has yet to
fully recover from that perception. Today the MLS is required for both public and academic librarians, serving as the terminal degree for academic librarians. Unfortunately, there is little variation in the curriculum for preparing different types of librarians.

The advent of library education as technical-based and non-scholarly had a profound impact on academic librarians. Faculty at colleges and universities wanted to hire librarians with scholarly reputations, which did not fit with the technical training received in library schools (Shiflett, 1981). Although more librarians came to campuses, they lacked training to work with students or faculty in more scholarly pursuits, which caused the early tension between disciplinary faculty and librarians. A significant effect of early library education was the shift away from librarians teaching students about library research. Shiflett argued that the German model ushered in the traditional reference service, where a librarian waits at a desk to answer questions, because of the demand for increased resources and guidance on their use. However, Hopkins (1982) argued that the rise of the traditional reference desk was not a “deliberate redefinition of the academic librarian’s role” but a consequence of clerical education that was not producing librarians with “the competence or status to teach research methods” (p. 196). The shift from teaching to service is a result of feminization and enabled the process of minoritization of academic librarians as they took on a less central role in student learning.

**Impact of feminization on professionalization and academic libraries.**

Feminization slowed the acceptance of librarianship as a profession. In 1961, Rossi (as cited in Garrison, 1977) stated,
Any occupation in which there is a high proportion of women suffers a special disability. Women depress the status of an occupation because theirs is a depressed status in the society as a whole, and those occupations in which women are found in large numbers are not seen as seriously competing with other professions for personnel and resources. (p. 14)

Thus, it is not surprising that the injustices faced by women in the library profession were rarely discussed. Highlighting the number of women shaping libraries would delay achievement of professional status (Garrison, 1977). The prevalence of women in library schools meant that library education was practice-based. A lack of theoretical basis for the work limited librarianship’s professional identity (Garrison, 1977; Hopkins, 1982; Shiflett, 1981). Additionally, women who provided “passive, inoffensive, and non-assertive service,” which was a “natural acting out of the docile behavioral role which females assumed in the culture” (Garrison, 1977, p. 15), shaped library development.

While some argued that the influx of women into libraries led to a decline in status of academic librarians (Atkins, 1991; Garrison, 1977; Hopkins, 1982), Shiflett (1981) argued that librarians have always had a minor position in the academic hierarchy, even when only male faculty served as librarians. Shiflett stated that librarians rarely had professional autonomy; a faculty committee typically controlled the library, and that committee controlled the acquisition budget. Librarians were hired for technical expertise, but the faculty made administrative and budget decisions. While trained librarians were needed for maintaining collections, in many cases the librarian served under a library director, who was a male faculty member. Thus, “trained librarians came to be viewed as a distinct class of academic worker whose status in the academic community was essentially subordinate” (Shiflett, 1981, p. 265). Regardless of the traditional low status of a college or university librarian, there is no doubt that
feminization of the library profession affected the development of the profession and served to further lower the status of academic librarians on campus. The perception of trained librarians together with feminization affected the role librarians would play in higher education.

**Hierarchies in Higher Education**

In 1975 Rich (as cited in Rich, 1979, p. 136) proclaimed that the “university is above all a hierarchy.” The campus hierarchy indicates levels of campus power and acts as a class system (Shore, 1991). Campus hierarchy is made up of administrators at the top, followed by faculty, and then staff. Within the faculty exists another hierarchy that ranks members by proven “merit”¹ (Shore, 1991). These ranks include Full Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Lecturer/Instructor/Non-Tenure Track, and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, Adjuncts or Contingent Faculty. Within the ranks, there is also the hierarchy of tenured versus non-tenured faculty, a separation that creates uneven power dynamics as it results in silencing untenured professors (Shore, 1991; Urrieta et al., 2015; Young et al., 2015). There are also gendered and racialized hierarchies that place minoritized faculty in subordinate positions in terms of pay, respect for scholarship, and tenure.

**Gendered and Racialized Hierarchies**

**Women faculty.** The climate for women faculty in higher education has changed little since Rich’s (as cited in Rich, 1979, p. 136) description of the academic hierarchy as “a small cluster of highly paid and prestigious persons, chiefly men, whose careers entail

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¹ The quotations are mine because literature suggests a “myth of meritocracy” (Steiger, 2013, para. 12).
the services of a very large base of ill-paid or unpaid persons, chiefly women.” She argued that the university is “a replica of the patriarchal family” (p. 139), and a “man-centered” hierarchy that is built on the exploitation of women (p. 137). Research on women in higher education since the 1970s continuously indicates that an academic hierarchy built on sexism and gender inequality still exists. Women faculty continue to be exploited on campus through heavier teaching loads and higher expectations of service than male faculty (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Johnsrund, 1993; Sandler & Hall, 1986; Tack & Patitu, 1992) while at the same time being paid less than male faculty (Curtis, 2010; Johnsrund, 1993; Mason, 2011; Patel, Sanders, Lundberg-Love, Gallien, & Smith, 2018; Sandler, 1992; Sandler & Hall, 1986).

The power hierarchy Rich discusses is also still evident in higher education. Women tend to work in less prestigious institutions and community colleges (Mason, 2011; Sandler, 1992). Regardless of institutional prestige, women faculty are clustered at the lowest faculty ranks (Anupam, Khullar, Ho, Olenski, & Blumenthal, 2015; Finklestein, Conley, & Schuster, 2016; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Mason, 2011; Sandler, 1992; Sandler & Hall, 1986; Steiger, 2013) and are less likely to be tenured (Finklestein et al., 2016; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Sandler & Hall, 1986). Additionally, women faculty are less likely to be in administrative positions (Mason, 2011; Patel et al., 2018; Sandler & Hall, 1986; Tack & Patitu, 1992).

Gender dynamics play out similarly in the academic library. In 2010, women accounted for 82.8% of the library workforce and men only 17.2%. However, men held 40% of all academic library administrator positions (American Library Association, 2011).
Faculty of color. Research indicates that faculty of color also experience unequal status with peers in higher education. Faculty of color are concentrated at less prestigious institutions, including community colleges (Turner & Myers, 2000). They are more represented in the lower ranks than white faculty (Garza, 1993; Johnsrund, 1993) and are less likely to get tenure than white faculty (Tack & Patitu, 1992; Turner & Myers, 2000). In a discussion of Chicano/Latino faculty, Garza stated that they are concentrated in ethnic or Chicano/Latino studies or Spanish language departments and are asked to serve on university committees with little campus impact. Garza (1993) named the process “barrioization” (p. 36), a process which leaves faculty of color out of mainstream campus decision making. Faculty of color also note that their research is not seen as scholarly, so it is not taken seriously in tenure decisions (Garza, 1993; Turner & Myers, 2000).

Women faculty of color. Women of color face double discrimination because of the intersection of their race and gender (Sandler & Hall, 1986; Turner & Myers, 2000). Like white women faculty, they are concentrated in less prestigious institutions and in lower faculty ranks (Harris & Gonzalez, 2012). They are overused by their departments and are burdened with more heavy teaching loads and more service than male faculty (Nieman, 2012). However, women faculty of color often feel more occupational stress than white women faculty as they are asked to do more service and fill the minority role on numerous committees (Turner & Myers, 2000). They also tend to have heavier advising loads because students of color seek them out for support and/or their departments require them to advise students of color (Nieman, 2012). Additionally, women faculty of color face a hyper-visibility because of their race, causing their mistakes to be more noticed (S. Wilson, 2012). Adding to this, women of color
sometimes face a chilly climate from male faculty of color (Sandler & Hall, 1986) and limited support from white women faculty (Sandler & Hall, 1986; Turner & Myers, 2000), making their sense of isolation and marginalization more pronounced.

**Race in the academic library.** Librarians of color account for only 15% of the library workforce (Griffin, 2013) and have similar experiences to non-library faculty of color in terms of experiencing perceived incompetence due to their race, gaining tenure and promotion in the library (Griffin, 2013), and being less represented than white librarians in administrative positions (Flowers & Moore, 2008).

**Contingent faculty.** The largest mass of faculty in the academic hierarchy sit at the bottom; these are contingent faculty working in both full and part-time positions (K. Thompson, 2003). They make up 75.0% of the academic workforce (Steiger, 2013). Contingent faculty have described themselves as second-class citizens (Boyd, 2016; K. Thompson, 2003). They report low pay (Boyd, 2016), heavy workloads (K. Thompson, 2003), limited access to resources (Street, Maisto, Merves, & Rhoades, 2012), and invisibility (Boyd, 2016; Street et al., 2012). Additionally, contingent faculty note their lack of work stability, lack of due process protections (K. Thompson, 2003), and lack of role in faculty governance (Boyd, 2016; K. Thompson, 2003) contribute to feelings of second-class citizenry. Contingent faculty are a minoritized occupation-group on campus with similar experiences to academic librarians.

**Academic Librarians**

The academic library is a microcosm of higher education in that it replicates power hierarchies and patterns of minoritization evident in higher education generally. In the campus hierarchy, librarians may be faculty or they may be staff. Librarians who are
staff are granted limited access to conversations about their institutions’ educational mission and play no part on campus committees. Librarians with faculty status are in the lower tier of the faculty hierarchy. Like the experiences of minoritized faculty, academic librarians face the perception (by their non-library faculty peers) that they are not legitimate members of the academy and are instead outsiders (Griffin, 2013). Academic librarians with faculty status are “frequently reminded that their faculty status is a round peg trying to fit into a square hole of the dominant faculty culture” (Griffin, 2013, p. 90). Librarians of color, especially women librarians of color, experience “compound marginality” (Griffin, 2013, p. 90) because of the intersections of their race and gender and the perceptions of their role as a librarian. Academic librarians’ place in the higher education hierarchy, along with the perceptions that others hold of librarians, has played a role in the process of minoritization of academic librarians in higher education.

**Minoritized Stereotypes and Impacts on Minoritized Faculty**

Research on the experiences of minoritized faculty in higher education reveals that gender and racial stereotypes borne in society permeate higher education, and these stereotypes create inequitable institutions (Williams, 2004). Minoritized faculty battle the perception that they are affirmative action hires (Delgado-Romero et al., 2003; Sandler, 1991). They share similar experiences of being considered less competent than their white or male peers by students and colleagues (Miller & Chamberlin, 2000) and having their credentials and credibility questioned by both colleagues and students (Harlow, 2003; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Hune, 1998; Lugo-Lugo, 2012; Mayuzumi, 2008; Sharp-Grier, 2015; Vargas, 2002; S. Wilson, 2012). These issues are exacerbated for women and women of color because, while men’s success is perceived to be based on
talent, women’s success is attributed to luck or affirmative action (Sandler, 1991). This leads to hypervisibility for women faculty (doubly so for women faculty of color), as their successes are more scrutinized, and their mistakes are never forgotten (Hune, 1998; Williams, 2004).

When minoritized faculty enter classrooms, their gender, race, or intersectionality invokes stereotypical images in the minds of their students (Harlow, 2003; Vargas, 2002). Where white male faculty automatically get respect from students, minoritized faculty must work to earn it (Harlow, 2003; McGowan, 2000; Statham, Richardson, & Cook, 1991; Vargas, 2002). Minoritized faculty note that students resist their intellectual authority (Harlow, 2003; Pittman, 2010; Sandler, 1991; Vargas, 2002), and so they must proclaim their intellect regularly instead of it being implied (Harlow, 2003; Tuitt, Hanna, Martinez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009; Vargas, 2002). Black women faculty report students challenging both their competence (Ng, 1993; Pittman, 2010; Sandler, 1991) and their control of the classroom (Harlow, 2003), while Black male faculty report questions of competence but not classroom authority (Harlow, 2003), indicating that women faculty face a more difficult time in the classroom due to the stereotype that they should demonstrate feminine behavior.

The perceptions of women faculty create a catch-22 for women faculty since, in general, they are expected to conform to the typically feminine behaviors such as mothering and passiveness (Lester, 2008; Williams, 2004) or subservience to dominant male faculty (Williams, 2004). If women do not act in accordance with typical feminine behaviors, for example if they show assertiveness in meetings or attempt to establish authority in the classroom, they are perceived as angry and not collegial (Williams,
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2004). Issues of behavior manifest differently for women of color. The mammy stereotype of the caring, submissive Black woman permeates higher education (Harlow, 2003; S. Wilson, 2012). If Black women are not maternal, then they are seen as having an attitude or being the “angry black woman” (Harlow, 2003, p. 357). If Asian women do not conform to the model minority stereotype that implies compliance and submissiveness (Amos, 2015; Hune, 1998), they become the dragon lady (Mayuzumi, 2008). These stereotypes impact women faculty interactions with students. Women report harassment during class, verbal threats, and cruel course evaluations when they do not conform to their stereotypes (Harlow, 2003; Lugo-Lugo, 2012; Mayuzumi & Shahjahan, 2008; McGowan, 2000; Pittman, 2010).

Minoritized faculty are seen as token members of their department (Hinton, 2010; Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012; Prieto, 2015; J. W. Smith & Calasanti, 2005). They are asked to represent their gender and/or their race at meetings and events, with no expectation of true participation; they are to be seen and not heard (Hinton, 2010). Their identity as minoritized faculty leads to them being asked to do more service than other faculty as they are asked to represent the department as the woman or the woman of color or the faculty of color (Delgado-Romero et al., 2003; Hune, 1997; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Turner, 2002). Consequently, gender and race (or their intersection) usurp minoritized faculty identity and weaken their authority as faculty (Hirshfield & Joseph, 2012).

Ultimately race and gender stereotypes formed outside of the ivory tower serve to ostracize minoritized faculty in the workplace; they are excluded from social interactions, information sources, power, and support systems (J. W. Smith & Calasanti, 2005; Zimmerman, Carter-Sowell, & Xu, 2016). Academic librarians experience similar
exclusions in higher education based on the societal stereotypes of librarians and the implications of those stereotypes on librarians’ work.

The Librarian Stereotype and its Impact in Higher Education

Librarians have been battling negative stereotypes since 1876 when Melville Dewey described the librarian as a “mouser in musty books” (Dewey as cited in Jennings, 2016, p. 95). As the profession became feminized, the stereotype of a “pale undernourished man who lived only for his books” (Dickinson, 2003, p. 98) was replaced with the “spinster whose role is totally subservient” (Radford & Radford, 1997, p. 261). An early study on public perceptions of librarians found that, while there were some positive qualities associated with librarians such as “cultured” and “intellectual,” the negative qualities such as “meek” and “timid” outweighed the positive (Form, 1946, p. 853). In a seminal study on librarian stereotype conducted 37 years later, P. Wilson (1982) described similar perceived personality traits associated with librarians, which included orderly, conservative, submissive, nonsocial, and lacking self-confidence. Radford and Radford (1997) stated that Dewey’s focus on efficiency and clerical education “created and perpetuated a submissive, dependent, spinsterish librarian image of such strength . . . it is now assumed real” (p. 253).

Librarian stereotypes focus on personality or physical characteristics, not the work of librarianship (Seale, 2008; Vassilakaki & Moniarou-Papaconstantinou, 2014). Images in popular media show librarians shelving books or hunting down library fines (Highsmith, 2003, p. 78); thus, the public is unaware of the “education, knowledge, skills, and duties of librarians,” and consequently, the librarian is invisible (Seale, 2008, para 10). Since stereotypes are “a product of social learning acquired from the media and
human interaction the stereotype of the librarian is a social fact” (P. Wilson, 1982 p. 9).
Thus, the perceptions that librarianship is a “weak, dependent” profession (Dickinson, 2003, p. 105) and that librarians are “expected to be subdued, quiet, polite, and respectful” (P. Wilson, 1982, p. 7) persist. These perceptions have serious implications for academic librarians.

**Implications of the Librarian Stereotype**

**Negative faculty perceptions.** Prevailing stereotypical images of librarians have permeated college and university campuses, leaving disciplinary faculty with the same negative perceptions about academic librarians (Doskatsch, 2003). Because librarians’ work on campus is mostly hidden, and it is difficult for faculty to distinguish between librarians and staff (Oberg et al., 1989), the perception is that an academic librarian’s job is clerical, a view expressed in older and more recent literature (Davis, 2007; Holbrook, 1968; Oberg et al., 1989). Academic librarians have typically been viewed as servants by disciplinary faculty (Blackburn, 1968; Christiansen, Stombler, & Thaxton, 2004; Holbrook, 1968; Pagowsky & DeFrain, 2014). The last fifty years of literature on faculty perceptions suggests that disciplinary faculty do not consider academic librarians, regardless of faculty status, to be their academic equals or their peers (Hardesty, 1995; Holbrook, 1968; Ivey, 1994; Kempcke, 2002; Oberg et al., 1989). Instead, “faculty often view us as helpers, which while friendly is more subservient than collegial” (Pagowsky & DeFrain, 2014, p. 5).

In a recent study, Alwan et al. (2018) discuss status-based microaggressions experienced by academic librarians from disciplinary faculty. Like microaggressions based on race or gender, status-based microaggressions result from academic librarians
being perceived as having a different group membership from disciplinary faculty. In their survey, Alwan et al. presented four groups of status-based microaggressions experienced by academic librarians: (a) assumptions of inferiority, (b) classism, (c) collaboration for information literacy sessions, and (d) collaboration for technical services. Examples of these microaggressions included disciplinary faculty acting surprised by an academic librarians’ educational level, disciplinary faculty indicating a difference between librarians and faculty on campus, teaching faculty requesting library instruction with no notice or asking librarians to teach when the disciplinary faculty member is at a conference, and disciplinary faculty demanding materials even after being told by a librarian that an item cannot be purchased. Alwan et al. found that the prevalence of microaggressions experienced by academic librarians “supports the assertion that many teaching faculty view academic librarians as subordinate” (p. 43). The treatment of academic librarians by disciplinary faculty preserves the minoritized role academic librarians play on campus and may be a factor in academic librarian deference behavior.

**Negative impact on work.** Pagowsky and DeFrain (2014) declared that “stereotypes aren’t just annoying, humorous illustrations of us; they can seriously impact the work we do” (p. 7). The negative image of librarians may influence funding in terms of collections and salaries (Leigh & Sewny, 1960; Pagowsky & Rigby, 2014). Public perceptions may also “create barriers to the effective delivery of information services” (Hicks, 2014, p. 252) and make it difficult to integrate into campus communities (Pagowsky & Rigby, 2014). The negative image of academic librarians held by disciplinary faculty makes it difficult to build successful librarian-disciplinary faculty
relationships, especially when it comes to teaching students and integrating information literacy into the campus curriculum (Badke, 2005; Hardesty, 1995; Kempcke, 2002; Mattson, Kirker, Oberlies, & Byrd, 2017; McGuinness, 2006; Meulemans & Carr, 2013).

Literature suggests that faculty resist librarians as teachers (Blackburn, 1968; Hardesty, 1995; Oberg et al., 1989). McGuinness (2006) found that faculty do not see information literacy as a priority because they believe students get what they need through class assignments and that there is no formal structure needed to gain information literacy (p. 578). Thus, the nature of teaching done by librarians is not valued (Hardesty, 1995; Manuel, Beck, & Molloy, 2005; Mattson et al., 2017; Oberg et al., 1989).

Negative self-image. In her seminal work on librarian stereotypes, P. Wilson (1982) described librarians as a minority group, defined as “any group of people who because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who, therefore, regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination” (p. 30). P. Wilson never claimed that librarians are a true minority group; she hypothesized that librarians’ response to their occupational identity would be similar to how members of minority groups respond to minority status. Through a quantitative content analysis of library literature written between 1921 and 1978, P. Wilson (1982) discovered that “librarians do regard themselves as receiving differential treatment, and they do see themselves as being objects of collective discrimination” (p. 31). She also found that librarians responded to their stereotype in a similar way as minority groups by either accepting the stereotype as
true, denying the stereotype, calling to purify the group, or disassociating with the group entirely.

Most significantly, P. Wilson (1982) argued that all of these taken together result in “self-hatred” (p. 36). Self-hatred manifests as scorn for the group, hatred of one segment of the group, and possibly “doubt of one’s worth” (P. Wilson, 1982, p. 36). These feelings come “from seeing one’s group and oneself through the eyes of the majority” (P. Wilson, 1982, p. 36), or in the case of academic librarians, through the eyes of the disciplinary faculty. Early writings indicated that librarians held a minority group identity early on. In 1941, McEwan wrote that because the college librarian served the faculty, librarians “[naturally seek] social acceptance from this majority group” (p. 171). Later, Knapp (1959) stated that, “even with faculty rank, unless he teaches, he is likely to feel . . . that he doesn’t quite belong, until and unless he proves himself to be personally qualified as an educator and a scholar” (p. 61). She continued by stating that, “one could almost say that the college librarian who identifies himself with the library world loses status in the academic world” (p. 61).

The poor self-image of librarians is also noted regularly in the literature. In 1957, Douglas (as cited in Holbrook, 1968) stated that librarians were highly self-critical. Other literature noted that this negative self-image hinders librarians’ quest for professional recognition and status (Doskatsch, 2003; Kempcke, 2002). Librarians may see their occupation group as preventing achievement of recognition or status, and, thus, they may work to set themselves apart from the occupation group. This is seen in calls for academic librarians to change the negative perceptions of librarians by gaining faculty status (Leigh & Sewny, 1960; P. Wilson, 1982). Academic librarians’ fight for faculty
status comes from their desire to align themselves with the majority group (the disciplinary faculty). Faculty status is a way to break from the public librarian group and set up their own identity as academic librarians.

**Academic Librarian Faculty Status**

The first known discussion of library faculty status appeared in 1878 when Sawtelle (1878) stated that academic librarianship “should be itself a professorship” (p. 162). The debate about faculty status for academic librarians has continued for 140 years. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) convened the Committee on Academic Status in 1958, which became a standing committee in 1969 (L. C. Branscomb, 1970). In 1972, the ACRL, in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU; then just AAC), wrote the Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians (Association of College & Research Libraries, 1975). This statement endorsed faculty status for academic librarians, claiming that librarians “[play a] major role in the learning process” (para. 1). The statement goes so far as to say that “library resources should be taken into account in such important academic decisions as curricular planning and faculty appointments” (para. 2); thus, “librarians should have a voice in the development of the institution’s educational policy” (para. 2). The ACRL reaffirmed the Joint Statement in 2018 (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2018).

Early arguments for faculty status that appeared in the 1900s focused on the teaching role of librarians, and later arguments focused on status as a way to improve image. McEwan (1941) spoke to the need for recognition and belonging that would come with status. Others noted that faculty status would help librarians from being seen as
second-class citizens and from feeling inferior (Ditzion, 1947; Gelfand, 1948; Knapp, 1959), and some argued that academic librarians could fix the negative public images of librarians on campus by obtaining faculty rank (Leigh & Sewny, 1960). The main arguments presented in favor of faculty status were that librarians hold an important teaching role on campus, librarians contribute to scholarship, and that faculty status would make academic librarians more effective.

**Librarian as Teacher**

In 1935, Wriston argued that, although librarians held administrative duties, a librarian was above all “an officer of instruction” (p. 178). Wriston argued that because librarians had a significant teaching role to play on campus, they should also have “the scholarly interests and tastes which are expected of other members of the faculty” (p. 182), and, thus, “be given faculty status and should participate in all the committee and other discussions incidental to that status” (p. 182). It was clear in the early writing about faculty status that the ideal academic librarian would be a scholar-practitioner, focused on research and teaching like disciplinary faculty (Maloy, 1939; Wriston, 1935).

Little was written in support of the librarian teacher role in the 1930s and 1940s. A 1936 text on library administration argued clearly in favor of librarians being classed as administrative staff. Randall and Goodrich (1936) stated that the role of the librarian is more “administrative . . . than pedagogical” (p. 31). Writing from librarians who supported faculty status focused on providing data on the number of librarians with faculty status and the type of rank, salaries, and benefits such as tenure and sabbatical (Estes, 1941; Maloy, 1939; McMillen, 1940). These authors noted the teaching and scholar roles of academic librarians as a reason for needing status, but they also reflect a
desire to improve the librarian image; McMillen (1940) stated that granting faculty status “would answer the objection of the librarian who does not like his people being called a mere part of the ‘hired help’” (p. 140).

A shift in thinking appeared in the professional literature in 1941 when Randall and Goodrich published the second edition of their text in which they stated that “even though the librarian conducts no classes, his teaching function is very important . . . his responsibilities should place him with the faculty group rather than the administrative” (p. 31). Support for the teaching role, and librarians’ role in the educational mission of the institution, continued to appear in the professional literature in the late 1940s and 1950s. In discussing how University of Illinois librarians gained faculty status in 1944, Downs (1946) cited their educational role on campus. Similarly, Pierson and Rovelstad (1958) cited the teaching role of librarians and the increased need for instructing incoming students about the library when discussing faculty status at the University of Maryland. In a speech to the ACRL in 1957 about securing status for librarians, McAnnally stressed the need for librarians to be teaching in order to make the case for status on campus. Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century, the literature is filled with librarians supporting the belief that librarians are teachers (Budd, 1982; Galloway, 1977; Josey, 1977) and exploring the librarian teaching role (Davis, 2007; Julien, 2002; Julien & Genuis, 2011; Julien & Pecoskie, 2009; Mattson et al., 2017; Walter, 2008).

There were certainly arguments against the teacher role; even in the 1940s, when B. H. Branscomb (1940) argued for faculty status and increasing the role of librarians in the educational mission of colleges, others declared that librarians were not teachers
(Brown, 1940). The voices of those who disagreed with faculty status based on librarians’ teaching roles grew louder in the 1960s and 1970s. Schiller’s (1968) survey of academic librarian faculty status noted a small number of librarians who were opposed to faculty status, indicating dissent within the profession. These librarians stated, “professors profess, and librarians serve,” (p. 83) indicating a belief within the profession at the time that academic librarians were indeed lower in the academic hierarchy than disciplinary faculty. These librarians also stated that “librarians do not deserve faculty status unless they have higher degrees in other subject fields” (Schiller, 1968, p. 83). These arguments reappear in the opposition literature in later years.

Blackburn (1968) claimed there was a personal conflict between librarians and faculty, stating that librarians were jealous of faculty because of their teaching role; he claimed that librarians were “in a servant role” and were not teachers (p. 174). Blackburn’s (1968) argument indicates that the expectations of feminized behavior from librarians existed even from within the profession. In a satire piece published in American Libraries, the profession’s premier trade publication, Gore (1971) depicted academic librarians with faculty rank as frauds. He stated that because librarians do not teach, they are “not likely ever to be regarded as faculty by anyone other than themselves” (p. 295). Gore (1971) called for librarians to be classified as administrators, as it was “better to be recognized as a respectable administrator than a sham teacher” (p. 295). P. Wilson (1979) called librarians as teachers an “organizational fiction” (p. 149), arguing that for library instruction to be effective it had to be tied to the [course] professor. P. Wilson (1979) argued that librarians called themselves teachers simply to ensure a better status on
campus and that it was the need for a better self-image that prompted librarians to take on the title of teacher.

Arguments against the teacher role continued in the 1980s. Peele (1984) argued that librarians wanted to “steal” the teacher identity because “in order to obtain the status for our work that our pride demands it should have, we must attach ourselves to a profession that’s both respected and easy to understand” (p. 269). These arguments continued into the 21st century; Cronin (2001) called the phrase library faculty status the “mother of all myths” (p. 144), arguing that faculty status is expensive and detracts from a library’s service mission, which is to “support, not define or negotiate, the academic mission of the university” (p. 144). Cronin’s argument supports a marginalized role on campus for academic librarians.

**Librarian as Scholar**

Another argument in support of faculty status was that librarians engaged in research activities warranting the status. These activities included developing personal research agendas or supporting the research of faculty and graduate students (Pierson & Rovelstad, 1958). Downs (1946) noted that indicating the number of librarians engaged in research helped librarians gain faculty status at the University of Illinois. Similarly, McAnnally (1957) discussed engagement in research as essential for securing faculty status for librarians. Downs (1946, 1954) also stressed the role librarians play in research, stating that a library “is an essential condition for research, without which additions are unlikely to [be] made to the sum of human knowledge” (Downs, 1954, p. 78).

Those opposed to faculty status scoffed at the notion that librarians were engaged in research comparable to disciplinary faculty. In 1977, Axford, former president of the
ACRL and University Librarian at the University of Oregon, claimed that the MLS did not provide rigorous scholarly training to warrant faculty status. Interestingly, it was during his tenure as the ACRL president that the MLS was accepted as the terminal degree for academic librarians (Caris, 2015). Axford (1977) also argued that academic librarians seemed “unwilling to pay the full dues” (p. 277) for membership into the faculty in the form of research and publication.

Peele (1984) also questioned the librarian-scholar identity. The arguments may be warranted; two studies published in the 1970s indicated that academic librarians published less than other faculty (Massman, 1972; Watson, 1977). Additionally, the opinion of the time was that most library publications were “of questionable scholarly merit” compared to other disciplines and made little contributions to theory in the field (Mortimer, 1979, p. 449). Of course, the development of library education in light of feminization of the profession did not provide space for academic librarians to engage in scholarly pursuits or to work towards contributing to theory in the field.

Arguments that academic librarian research is on par with disciplinary faculty research were silenced in 1984 when K. F. Smith and DeVinney published their survey of academic librarians which revealed that 47.0% of those surveyed received tenure with no publications. In 1999, Mitchell and Reichel found that librarians received tenure by substituting service for research. These studies indicate that academic librarians’ research output may not be equivalent to disciplinary faculty, which works to further marginalize academic librarians with faculty status who must constantly justify their status to disciplinary faculty.
The barriers to publishing for academic librarians may explain the lack of productivity and different tenure standards. In multiple surveys, librarians have indicated that their inflexible schedule (compared to disciplinary faculty), the fact that they work 40 hours per week, and that they have a 12-month instead of a 9-month contract are factors that hinder their ability to do research (Black & Leysen, 1994; Cosgriff, Kenney, & McMillan, 1990; Floyd & Phillips, 1997). These are institutional structures that create barriers for librarians to pursue scholarship at the frequency of disciplinary faculty and are especially hindering for librarians with faculty status who are required to publish and participate in campus service to earn tenure and promotion.

Moreover, librarians do not feel the MLS prepared them to conduct research, which contributes to the differences in research quantity and quality compared to other faculty (Hoggan, 2003; Kennedy & Brancolini, 2012; Miller & Benefiel, 1998; Powell, Baker, & Mika, 2002). These perceptions indicate that library education is not fully preparing future academic librarians for higher education. These are more factors that may add to the academic librarian inferiority complex leading to deference behavior, especially among librarians with faculty status.

**Job Effectiveness**

Another early argument in favor of granting faculty status was that it would make librarians better librarians. Muller (1953) justified faculty status as “a means of enabling properly qualified librarians to play a more effective role in the academic community, for they can then communicate and collaborate with the teaching faculty as peers” (p. 89). The following year, Downs (1954) stated, “if the librarians are recognized as an integral part of the academic ranks, if they are a vital group in the educational process, with high
qualifications for appointment, and all the rights and privileges of other academic employees, we can feel confident that the library will rank high in all-round effectiveness” (p. 78). L. C. Branscomb (1957) claimed to be convinced of faculty status “with respect to the better integration of library service in the university’s teaching and research programs” (p. 43). This argument was moved further by Muller in 1970, when he claimed that faculty status was important for librarians because “even if the amount of scholarship produced by librarians may not be overly large or impressive, it will tend to make librarians more at home in the world of scholarship and, thus, cause them to become better librarians” (p. 32). Additionally, academic librarians argued that the protections of academic freedom that they gained with faculty status allowed them more freedom to do their job well (Coker, vanDuinkerken, & Bales, 2010).

These arguments reflect feelings of low self-worth as they imply that librarians cannot communicate effectively with disciplinary faculty unless the librarian holds professorial rank. Arguments in support of faculty status also appear in more recent literature. In a 2003, review of literature discussing librarian faculty status, Hoggan reported that librarians believed faculty status gave them higher stature on campus, which might make it easier for librarians to “win the respect of faculty” (p. 433). From a 2016 study on librarian perceptions of faculty status, it is evident that, for librarians, obtaining faculty status is an important part of getting a “seat at the table” (Galbraith, Garrison, & Hales, 2016, p. 590) and that this seat can help foster better relationships between librarians and disciplinary faculty. A participant in the study did note, however, “faculty status alone does not make teaching faculty respect us. Rather, it is our own attitudes and how we work with them that solidifies the relationship” (p. 590).
Job Satisfaction

Most of the early literature on faculty status is commentary, and most early research is quantitative data describing the scope and nature of faculty status in colleges and universities (Estes, 1941; Maloy, 1939; McMillen, 1940). It is in the 1960s where the first discussion of librarian perceptions of faculty status is seen (Schiller, 1968). Librarians in Shiller’s study noted a desire for faculty status as the path to job satisfaction, which included better relationships with faculty and better pay. Status was also seen as the way to attract more qualified people to the profession. In the 1990s, more researchers began looking at librarians’ perceptions of faculty status. This body of research found that librarians preferred faculty status to not having it; Benedict (1991) noted that 2/3 of the librarians surveyed felt the benefits of rank outweighed the costs. In a study on job satisfaction and faculty rank, Horenstein (1993) found that librarians with rank had higher levels of overall job satisfaction than librarians without rank. Library directors also noted a positive relationship between librarian faculty status and their own job satisfaction if faculty status was not symbolic, meaning that library faculty were required, and given time, to pursue research (Koenig, Morrison, & Roberts, 1996).

Recent research into academic librarian faculty status has indicated that academic librarians without status who work alongside librarians who are on a tenure-track or have tenure have the lowest levels of job satisfaction and commitment to their institutions, while academic librarians working in a tenure line-only environment have the highest levels of satisfaction and commitment (Becher, 2019). Part of the lack of satisfaction and commitment stems from non-tenure status academic librarians being excluded from important committees. In one example, librarians were not eligible to serve on the general
education revision committee, resulting in every other core competency required by the accrediting body being written into the “explicit language of the core curriculum revision except for information literacy” (Becher, 2019, p. 217).

**Current State of Librarian Faculty Status**

The number of institutions not giving faculty rank to librarians grew smaller in the 1950s (Carlson, 1955). By 1966, 51.0% of academic librarians had faculty status; by 1977, 75.0% of academic librarians had faculty status (Schmidt, 1977). Despite the growth in librarians with faculty status, research in the 1980s found that, although institutions granted faculty status, benefits of the classification such as titles, tenure eligibility, pay, and sabbatical were not on par with disciplinary faculty (Davidson, Thorson, & Trumpeter, 1981; Gray & McReynolds, 1983). Recent studies noted similar results (Bolin, 2008; Freedman, 2014; Walters, 2016). Walters (2016) indicated that 52.0% of research universities in the U.S. grant some kind of faculty status to librarians, indicating a decline in status since 2008. Over the past twenty years, we have seen faculty status taken away from academic librarians (Dunn, 2013; Freedman & Dursi, 2011). The University of Louisville, which granted librarian faculty status in 1966, revoked it in 1992 in an effort to save money and improve staffing. It was ultimately reinstated in 2002 (Freedman & Dursi, 2011).

Stripping librarians of their faculty status is considered a cost-saving measure for some institutions. In 2011, librarians in the Alamo Colleges System in Texas lost faculty status and Mount Hood Community College fired all its professional librarians in order to save money (Freedman & Dursi, 2011). More recently, in 2013, University of Virginia librarians were informed that future positions in the library would be staff, not faculty
positions (Horowitz, 2013). It is certainly less expensive to hire a staff person to fill a librarian position. In Colorado, there are two staff-level librarian classifications--Librarian and Library Technician. Neither of these job categories or levels requires the MLS (Colorado Division of Human Resources, 2018). However, removing faculty status could lead to institutions hiring librarians into these categories without the MLS at significantly lower annual costs. These positions can start as low as $16,000 (Gregory Heald, personal communication, April 1, 2019). This is certainly less expensive than hiring someone on a contract-renewable or tenure-track faculty line.

Faculty status for librarians has an undeniably precarious grounding and continues to cause dissonance in the profession. Librarian status, faculty or otherwise, varies by institution and even within that very institution over time. This shaky ground could be a contributing factor to academic librarian deference behavior.

**Deference Behavior in Higher Education**

Deference behavior manifests in the work of minoritized groups in higher education - those needing to defer to peers due to their minoritized status. Given the research into lateral deference behavior where people defer to peers as a way to maintain status (Fragale et al., 2012) and that minoritized faculty, junior faculty, and academic librarians may be exhibiting lateral deference in their work, I posit that deference behavior is a consequence of minoritization. Thus, in this section, I discuss both minoritized faculty deference behavior and academic librarian deference behavior in higher education.
Minoritized Faculty Deference Behavior

While deference behavior in minoritized faculty has not been discussed explicitly, literature on minoritized faculty indicates its existence. In a 2003 article on coping strategies for Hispanic faculty in higher education, Guanipa, Santa Cruz, and Chao (2003) advised new Hispanic faculty to “work hard . . . going beyond the minimum requirements without going overboard or doing more than department norms” (p. 200). They argued that Hispanic faculty need to “be sensitive to other colleagues” and that “doing more” causes resentment (p. 200). This advice, while sound given the climate for minoritized faculty and difficulties to successfully obtaining tenure and promotion, indicates deference to the majority faculty in one’s department. Deference is a common theme in the literature on minoritized faculty behavior (Hinton, 2010; Shrake, 2006). Shrake (2006), reflecting on her experience as an Asian-American woman faculty member, noted that she “took on the model minority trait of compliance and quiet accommodation” because “it was the most expedient survival tactic” (p. 187). Similarly, Hinton (2010) noted that “in order to participate [in higher education] black women must embrace their own inferiority” (p. 396) by assimilating to the majority perspective. The literature also discusses the concept of shifting (Hinton, 2010; Kim, Hall, Anderson, & Willingham, 2011), defined by Hinton (2010) as a process where minoritized faculty change their “voices, attitudes, and postures” in the workplace in order to downplay their diverse identities (p. 397).

Deference is also seen in the lower ranks of the professoriate. Pre-tenured faculty are often self-silenced (Urrieta et al., 2015; Young et al., 2015), which is a deferent action to tenured faculty caused by fear. Urrieta et al. (2015) shared the story of a pre-tenured
Latino faculty member who felt silenced in meetings and who also self-censored himself in the classroom for fear of repercussions due to any politically radical stance he may have presented that would not be appreciated by senior faculty. Similarly, Young et al. (2015) noted that junior faculty (regardless of race or gender) “feel they cannot express themselves, speak up at meetings, or challenge tenured faculty in formal or informal settings” (p. 67).

**Academic Librarian Deference Behavior**

In an analysis of academic librarian listserv posts from 1995-2005, Given and Julien (2005) revealed librarians’ beliefs about their work. Deference behavior within the profession is noted in these posts through librarians’ frustrations with colleagues who “are afraid to say no or offend, preferring to stick with preconceived roles as nice people” (Given & Julien, 2005, p. 35). This particular comment indicates a frustration from some in the profession around librarians working within the stereotypical role.

While not explicitly stated as deference behavior, Meulemans and Carr (2013) posed a revolutionary stance on librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships by arguing that “librarians must cease being at the service of faculty” when it comes to information literacy instruction (p. 81). They argued that librarians must “sometimes say ‘no’ . . . and instead question, engage, and converse with faculty” (p. 81). A true plea against deference behavior, Meulemans and Carr (2013) challenged librarians to take equal, “and if necessary, primary agency in the construction of the [information literacy] learning environment for students” or else risk being “an automaton that serves the needs of faculty” (p. 88).
Given and Julien (2005) and Meulemans and Carr (2013) highlight deference behavior and call for a change in the behavior. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, there is no literature that probes deeper into academic librarian deference behavior. While Julien and Pecoskie (2009) and Downey (2016) noted librarians’ deferential approaches to faculty relationships, they did not explore these findings in any meaningful way. Thus, library scholars are ignoring the behavior that is most negatively impacting the librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship.

**Enhancing the Role of Academic Librarians**

Over the last 15 years, academic librarians have been called to action to take a more central role on campus in order to integrate information literacy into the overall curriculum (Ariew, 2014; Mavodza, 2011; Owusu-Ansah, 2004). In 2004, Owusu-Ansah stated that the goal for academic librarians should be to “construct a comprehensive information literacy program centered in the library and with the full and complete academic ambitions of a teaching department” (p. 11). Owusu-Ansah called for academic librarians to be proactive in arguing for greater participation in the “education enterprise within which it operates” (p. 12). Recognizing a lack of proactive behavior of academic librarians, Owusu-Ansah warned that shying away from the goal of becoming a teaching department out of fear of difficulty or potential resistance “would be an attempt at political suicide” for academic librarians (p. 12). Owusu-Ansah also stated that academic librarians would need to be “daring” if they want to make change (p. 12).

Seven years later Mavodza (2011) made the same demand to academic librarians, stating that “the future of academic librarianship depends on the ability to integrate services and practices into the teaching and learning process” (p. 448). This argument
appears again in 2014 when Ariew declared a paradigm shift in academic libraries “from the past role of repositories of information to a more active role in teaching and learning” (p. 220). Ariew stated that librarians must be “collaboratively embedded into curricula and assume strong teaching roles within their institutions” (p. 220). Through these calls to action, these authors assert the need to move beyond the support role into leadership roles as change agents on campus.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that informed this research on academic librarian deference behavior is the Grounded Theory of Paradoxes and the Potential for Play, which posits that successful community college academic librarians will use a play-framework to play the “organizational game” (Cunningham, 2012, p. 274) of their institutions in order to navigate the tensions, or paradoxes, of their work. These tensions are created by the marginalized role of academic librarians on campus as well as the hybrid nature of the librarian role as librarian and teacher since this hybrid role does not fit naturally into existing higher education structures (Cunningham, 2012). The tensions stem from the work librarians do to influence “decisions and actors outside of the library, beyond their zone of authority” (Cunningham, 2012, p. 228).

**Model of Nested Organizational Tensions**

Cunningham’s (2012) Model of Nested Organizational Tensions, developed to illustrate her theory, shows five levels of librarians’ work, referred to as paradigms--epistemological, professional, curricular, programmatic, and classroom--and the tensions present within each paradigm (see Figure 1). Each paradigm is nested within another, showing that the tensions can affect work at multiple levels. These tensions create a
paradox as they “cannot both be pursued simultaneously because they create competing demands” (Cunningham, 2012, p. 229). The paradigms that may be most relevant to this research are the curricular and classroom paradigms as I am interested in the interactions taking place between academic librarians and disciplinary faculty that occur in these paradigms. While the other three paradigms—Epistemological, Professional, and Program—may play a role in deference behavior, I am less interested in the context of the relationship.

Figure 1. Model of nested organizational tensions (Cunningham, 2012, p. 216).
Epistemological paradigm. The epistemological paradigm is focused on the assumptions that librarians hold about knowledge. The tensions in this paradigm are expert knowledge versus networked knowledge. Here the choice is between “preserving traditional norms of expertise and authority and embracing newer norms of crowd-sourcing and networked knowledge” (Cunningham, 2012, p. 229).

Professional paradigm. In the professional paradigm, librarians are struggling with professional changes outside of the institution. The tensions in this paradigm are library versus librarian. The choice is to focus on the library as the gatekeeper of knowledge that is housed in the physical building or to shift focus to the role of librarians that is not tied to physical space.

Curricular paradigm. The curricular paradigm is about the place of information literacy at the institution. In this paradigm, the tensions are integration versus authority. The decision is about librarians’ expertise and role on campus, asking if librarians should pursue curriculum that puts them in charge of information literacy or support curriculum that integrates information literacy into the work of all faculty.

Program paradigm. The program paradigm is about maintaining the library instruction program or a library liaison program. The tensions in this paradigm are tradition versus exploration. The decision is to maintain traditional forms of work or pursue new, creative approaches in order to build successful library programs.

Classroom paradigm. The classroom paradigm is focused on the work of librarians as teachers and their role in the classroom. The tensions in this paradigm are service versus teaching. Librarians must choose between a teacher orientation, where
they pursue their own goals for student learning, or a service orientation, where they focus on satisfying another faculty member’s goals for student learning.

**Play-Frameork**

Cunningham (2012) theorized that librarians who approach the tensions in their work from a play-framework are “more likely to feel effective and continue advancing their goals” (p. 247). She discussed cognitive and behavioral aspects of librarian play. Cognitive aspects include not expecting perfection, embracing multiple paths to success, and recognizing that organizational rules are “produced, reproduced, and changed” through action (p. 247). Behavioral aspects of play include challenging traditional campus roles for librarians, building alliances, and participating in conflict to influence campus rules. Play is a strategy used by librarians at one or all levels of their work to influence their organization. Approaching work tensions through a play-framework means that librarians embrace the conflict inherent in the tensions instead of denying the conflict. Cunningham (2012) argued, “when librarians do not play . . . they often express frustration and burnout” and feel “unappreciated, marginalized, and powerless” (p. 273) but that when they do play librarians are empowered. Figure 2 illustrates “the decision-points at which it becomes possible for librarians to enter or avoid the organizational game in order to influence the context in which they are teaching and create circumstances in which their instruction can be most effective” (Cunningham, 2012, p. 274).
Given the calls for academic librarians to play a more central role in the educational mission of their institutions (Ariew, 2014; Mavodza, 2011; Owusu-Ansah, 2004) and the submissive nature with which some academic librarians approach their work, Cunningham’s (2012) theory relating campus hierarchies, librarian minoritization,
and librarian behavior is a fitting lens through which to explore academic librarian
deferece behavior.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the history of academic librarians and their place in the
higher education hierarchy. I also discussed the impact of stereotypes on the work of
minoritized faculty and academic librarians and presented the theoretical framework
guiding this research. While higher education is viewed as an ivory tower, disconnected
from the outside world, it is not devoid of the social and political (Chayla Davison,
personal communication, Spring 2017). Minoritized faculty and staff face the same
stereotypes in the higher education workplace as they do outside of higher education and
these stereotypes are reinforced through organizational processes and structures (Lester,
2008). For academic librarians, the feminization of the profession spawned gender
stereotypes of compliance and servitude. These stereotypes influence campus hierarchical
structures and hinder librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. They also bring into
question academic librarian status in higher education. The debate over faculty status and
the removal of faculty status for academic librarians indicates the powerless position of
librarians on many campuses.

The calls for enhancing the role of academic librarians in higher education cannot
be answered if academic librarians shape their relationships with disciplinary faculty
through deference. The paradigm shifts from passive to active, from the periphery to the
center, will not be complete until academic librarians shift their behavior and are better
able to communicate and collaborate with disciplinary faculty. Research into deference
behavior is needed so that librarians begin to recognize, discuss, and overcome it. A lack
of understanding prohibits actionable change. Chapter III provides an overview of the study on academic librarian deference behavior, including methodology, methods, and researcher stance.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

I used an explanatory sequential mixed method design to explore academic librarian deference behavior in order to understand how the behavior manifests. The overarching mixed methods question guiding the study was:

Q1 How does deference behavior manifest in the work of teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States?

The Phase One quantitative question was:

Q1a What are the patterns of deference behavior in teaching-focused librarians?

The Phase Two qualitative questions were:

Q1b What factors influence librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships?
Q1c How do teaching-focused librarians negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty?
Q1d What are the underlying causes of academic librarian deference behavior?

To provide the reader context for the discussion of the worldviews guiding the development of this research study, I first provide a rationale for using mixed methods, and specifically the explanatory sequential design and then discuss worldviews. I also discuss challenges of using this mixed method design and how I overcame these challenges. Next, I present a visual diagram of the design phases. I then provide an overview of the methods for each phase and a discussion of inference quality and ethical considerations. I conclude with a discussion of my researcher stance.
**Rationale for Mixed Methods**

Mixed methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a better understanding of a problem than either approach alone can provide (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 as cited in Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The benefit of using mixed methods research is that researchers are not restricted to just quantitative or qualitative methods but have access to all tools of data collection. I employed an explanatory sequential design in this study, which began with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase. With this design, the emphasis is typically placed on the initial quantitative phase of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). However, I used the participant selection variant in this study, which used the quantitative phase to purposely sample participants for the qualitative, emphasis phase of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Figure 3 illustrates the design emphasis phase of this study.

![Figure 3. Mixed methods design emphasis.](image)

I chose an explanatory sequential mixed method design for this research because I wanted to first get a sense of the prevalence of deference behavior in academic librarians. I believe a survey design is useful in getting an overall picture of a population. I utilized the participant selection variant because I wanted the qualitative phase to be the emphasis phase; I believe talking with librarians provides a better understanding of deference behavior in academic librarians and provides the rich stories from librarians that cannot be achieved through a survey. Beginning with a quantitative phase helped me to determine an appropriate participant pool for the qualitative phase and ensured that the
academic librarians being interviewed in this study included a mixture of librarians with and without faculty status, librarians with varied years in the profession, and librarians who came to the discussions with different experiences related to deference behavior in their interactions with faculty. Creswell (2013) noted that it can be difficult to find participants who have all experienced a phenomenon; thus, this design allowed for a quantitative phase to better ensure that each participant in the qualitative phase of the study had experienced the phenomenon of deference behavior at some level.

**Philosophical Assumptions**

I am a pragmatist in that I see the value in both post-positivist and constructivist paradigms (Morgan, 2014). I approach the world with strong ideas that no amount of debate will change and with the knowledge that other ideas must be explored and understood from multiple perspectives. My ideas about the role of academic librarians in higher education is one where the former is at play, while my work with critical pedagogies and critical information literacy is one where the latter is at work. How I understand the world informs how I approach research. I agree with Dewey (as cited by Morgan, 2014) that the post-positivist assertion that the world exists outside of our conception of the world and the constructivist claim that the world is created by human conception are equally important. Mixed methods research is well-aligned with my worldview; it allowed me to explore the topic of academic librarian deference behavior in two different ways that I believe are equally important to its study and that will help us to come to a more in-depth understanding of the behavior.

This research study was guided by the “Multiple Paradigm Thesis,” which states that “multiple paradigms may serve as the foundation for mixed methods research”
(Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 99). I selected a sequential design; thus, different worldviews are used at each phase of the research study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this study, the quantitative phase employed a post-positivist worldview as I used a survey to determine patterns of deference behavior in academic librarians and used stratification to develop groups of participants determined by certain demographic data in order to select the best possible participants for the qualitative phase of the study. The qualitative phase shifted to a constructivist worldview as I was interested in engaging in discussion with other librarians with multiple perspectives on academic librarian deference behavior. The two paradigms guiding the separate phases of the study are described below.

**Post-Positivism**

Post-positivism grew from the rejection of the positivist position that realities can be free from researcher influence (Crotty, 1998). Post-positivists recognize that research findings can be neither “totally objective nor unquestionably certain” (Crotty, 1998, p. 40). Instead of establishing reality or truth through verified hypotheses, post-positivists offer knowable facts within probability that only hold truth until they are falsified (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014; Mertens, 2005). While post-positivists follow structured scientific methods, they also acknowledge multiple perspectives (Jones et al., 2014).

The Post-Positivist belief system operates under a critical realist ontology, meaning that “reality exists but can never be fully apprehended” (Guba, 1990, p. 23). The epistemology guiding the post-positivist worldview is objectivism. Post-positivist researchers believe “it is both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, noninteractive posture” to the research process (Guba, 1990, p. 20). Phase One of this
study was used to uncover patterns of deference behavior in academic librarians and ultimately provided me the opportunity to purposively sample participants for the qualitative phase of the study. My researcher influence existed in the development of the survey instrument, especially in the deference scale questions, as I used my own knowledge of the library literature and deference behavior to develop the scale. However, I relied on the statistical analysis to provide an understanding of possible patterns in academic librarian deference behavior and to determine the sub-pool of participants for the qualitative phase. I did not interact with the data subjectively until selecting qualitative participants.

**Constructivism**

Constructivists view knowledge as constructed from interaction with humans and the world and developed in a social context with the social dimension as central (Crotty, 1998). Constructivists take a more “individualistic understanding of the constructionist position;” thus, constructivism “points up the unique experience of each of us” and “suggests that each one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other” (Crotty, 1998, p. 58).

The ontological perspective underlying constructivists’ beliefs is relativism, meaning that “realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions” that are “dependent for their form and content on the person who hold them” (Guba, 1990, p. 27). The epistemology guiding the constructivist worldview is subjectivism, the belief that reality is created by interaction between researcher and participant. Thus, “findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two” (Guba, 1990, p. 27). There is a closeness developed between the researcher and the participant through the
constructivist worldview leading to a knowledge that is co-constructed. The second phase of this study provided multiple opportunities to engage in discussion and co-construction of knowledge with librarians about academic librarian deference behavior. A survey alone was not sufficient for an exploration of this topic, which I recognized must be approached in a way that brought in the voices of other librarians with different experiences and perspectives to shed light on librarian behavior. These different perspectives turned out to be very important because I began the study with what I thought were unbendable beliefs about deference behavior. As I co-constructed knowledge with the participants and engaged in conversations with them through the focus groups, my own beliefs about deference behavior shifted and my understanding of deference behavior became more nuanced.

Challenges in Implementing an Explanatory Sequential Design

Challenges to Explanatory Sequential Design

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) outlined four challenges to implementing a sequential explanatory design including (a) time commitment, (b) obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, (c) determining which quantitative results to explain, and (d) determining the sample of participants for the second phase. Each challenge, and how it was addressed in this study, is considered. Since the research is in two phases, there was a significant time commitment involved in this design. As this research was not grant funded, there was no specific timeline for the research. I collected and analyzed the quantitative data in a two-month period; thus, limited time was dedicated to the quantitative phase. The qualitative phase used two sets of online focus groups, which
limited researcher travel time while still creating opportunities for making connections with participants. The second challenge was securing IRB approval for the project since it is difficult to inform an IRB of the participants in Phase Two of the study. Because this study used the participant selection variant, the plan for participant selection was already in place. The same participants from the quantitative phase were considered as participants in the qualitative phase. The third challenge to this design, determining the quantitative results needing deeper analysis, is not a factor when using the participant selection variant since the purpose of the quantitative phase was to determine participants. Finally, the challenge of determining participants in the qualitative phase was overcome by using stratification to determine a pool of participants for the qualitative phase.

One challenge in this study was ensuring that the qualitative phase included participants who indicated high and low deference as well as held various demographic differences such as years in profession, age, gender, and race/ethnicity. An additional challenge of this research was finding participants willing to participate in a study over time rather than just complete one survey or attend one focus group. To overcome these challenges, I solicited participants from across the United States to help ensure a larger possible participant pool. I was specific about the maximum hours of participation I anticipated for the study so potential participants, especially for the qualitative phase of the study, could make an informed choice about participating. Additionally, I remained in constant communication with the qualitative participants using email to send reminders about consent forms and upcoming focus groups, and I also provided participants with
citations for the literature discussed during the focus groups as a way to keep them engaged in the discussions.

**Challenges to Mixed Methods Research**

A challenge for mixed methods researchers in general is the limited support of mixed methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Here I provide a few examples of researchers implementing an explanatory sequential design with the participant selection variant. In a dissertation exploring post-secondary persistence for minority students in STEM and minority-owned STEM businesses, Goodwyn (2017) used this design to ensure that participants in the qualitative phase of the study had exposure to entrepreneurial coursework. In another 2017 dissertation, Burton explored the impact of gendered racism on the mental health of Black college women. Burton (2017) used the participant selection variant to select participants who scored in the top 25.0% of the Gendered Racial Microaggression Scale in the quantitative phase to select the “most informative cases” (p. 70) for the interviews and focus groups conducted in the qualitative phase. The participant selection variant is also seen utilized in published research studies. Mapp, Hickson, Mercer, and Wellings (2016) used this design in their study of perceptions of sexually transmitted infections and care-seeking in British men and women. They first identified national patterns and then identified a purposive sample of men and women for the qualitative phase who met specific criteria. The key purpose of choosing the participant selection variant in mixed methods design is to ensure that participants in the qualitative phase meet certain criteria that the researcher determines is important for a qualitative inquiry of the topic. Goodwyn (2017) needed participants with exposure to certain curriculum while Burton (2017) only wanted to interview participants
with a particular test score. For my study I wanted to ensure, as best as possible, that I included participants in the qualitative phase with both high and low deference ranges as well as varying demographics such as time in the profession. I did not believe the study would be successful if I did not provide some judgement about who was asked to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. The participant selection variant allows for the researcher to purposively sample participants. My reason for choosing this design is like Mapp et al. (2016); I first wanted to identify larger patterns and then identify a specific purposive sample of participants who met specific criteria of deference behavior range and demographics.

**Methods**

This section discusses the methods used for each phase of the study. A visual flowchart of the study is presented in Figure 4.
**Figure 4. Mixed methods flowchart illustrating the Mixed methods design.**

**Phase One: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis**

**Participants.** There were 139 self-identified teaching-focused academic librarians working at 4-year institutions in the United States who completed the survey. I opened the study to all academic librarians in the United States since I believe that deference behavior exists profession-wide, and I did not want to limit the exploration to one state or region. Additionally, opening the study to all U.S. academic librarians at 4-year
institutions provided a better opportunity for getting participants for both phases of the study.

After obtaining IRB approval (see Appendix A for IRB approval notification), librarians were recruited with an email that included an overview of the entire mixed methods study and a link to an online survey (see Appendix B for recruitment email and Appendix C for informed consent). I used non-probability sampling methods meaning that I did not attempt to select a random sample from the population of academic librarians (Battaglia, 2008). I employed both convenience and snowball sampling techniques to gain participants for Phase One (Fink, 2003). I solicited participants through the ACRL information literacy listserv, the Colorado Academic Library Association listserv, the Mountain Plains Library Association Facebook page, the University of Alabama School of Library & Information Studies Alumni Facebook Page, and LinkedIn (convenience sampling). Additionally, I contacted seven middle-manager colleagues in academic libraries and asked them to distribute the survey to librarians in their departments and through their state organizations (convenience/snowball).

I posted the call to participate in the survey twice in all venues; the first call was sent on June 30, 2019, and the second on July 14, 2019. Research has suggested that multiple contacts increase responses to surveys (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000; Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014; Fan & Yan, 2010) but that more than two reminders no longer significantly increases responses (Sánchez-Fernández, Muñoz-Leiva, & Montoro-Ríos, 2012).

**Instrument.** Participants completed the Academic Librarian Behavior Survey, which I created in Qualtrics. The survey consisted of demographic questions including
faculty status, faculty rank, years in profession, degrees attained, gender identity, age, and ethnicity collected as independent variables on every participant (see Appendix D for survey). Questions related to organizational structures were also asked in the demographic section including ability to participate on committees and opportunities for tenure. I asked these question in order to determine if librarians hold faculty status in name only as they are denied the benefits of status provided to disciplinary faculty such as tenure and sabbatical.

Following the demographic questions, participants completed the Deference Scale, which consisted of six questions related to deference behavior. I developed these questions from statements in the work of Julien and Pecoskie (2009) and Downey (2016) in their discussions of librarians exhibiting deference behavior. Examples of the items include:

- Do you perceive yourself as subordinate to disciplinary faculty?
- Do you typically cede authority to disciplinary faculty when planning library instruction sessions?
- Do you typically defer to disciplinary faculty goals for information literacy sessions even if they have a limited or outdated understanding of the current information environment?

The scale determined a level of deference behavior for each participant. The higher number of yes answers indicated a higher deference score. The highest possible score was 6 (yes to all questions) and the lowest possible score was 0 (no to all questions). A low deference range was indicated by a score of 0-3 and a high deference range was indicated by a score of 4-6. Yes/No questions, as opposed to an option of
“Maybe” or “It Depends” were used. The use of deference behavior may be situation dependent but in order to more simply obtain a deference score to create strata for Phase Two sampling, yes/no questions were asked. At the end of the survey participants indicated if they were willing to participate in Phase Two of the study and were prompted for their full name and email if willing; 44 participants indicated their willingness to participate in Phase Two.

Data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics and the breakdown of these trends by faculty status. Deference score was determined using a scale of 0-6; low deference fell from 0-3 and high deference fell from 4-6. The participants were then assigned a deference range of L or H (low or high). Descriptive statistics were also run to determine patterns of deference behavior based on faculty status, year in profession, age, race, and gender.

Once I ran descriptive statistics on the full data set I created a new data set consisting of the 44 participants who indicated a willingness to participate in Phase Two. I used the new data set to create strata, distinct subsets of all participants (Kalsbeek, 2008), to determine the participants for Phase Two. I created four strata in SPSS by running a case summary report using variables name and email and grouping by the variables deference range (L or H) and faculty status, which I determined were the most important for selecting participants for the qualitative phase (Kalsbeek, 2008). The case summaries were further stratified in SPSS by grouping using gender, race/ethnicity, and years in profession.
Phase Two: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Participants. Of the 44 participants indicating interest in participating in Phase Two, 16 initially accepted invitations to participate in the focus groups. Two dropped out due to scheduling conflicts, one stopped answering communications about participating, and one had to leave the study due to a natural disaster in their state at the time of the first focus group. A final total of 12 teaching-focused academic librarians from 4-year institutions in the United States participated in both focus groups.

Krueger and Casey (2015) stated that if a researcher wants to compare how certain groups discuss issues, they should be separated into different focus groups. In order to compare high and low deference participant opinions, librarians were selected from each strata determined in the quantitative analysis for the first set of focus groups; given these were online focus groups, a smaller number was ideal (Krueger & Casey, 2015). My goal was to have four participants per strata participate. Participants from each strata were selected to ensure, where possible, a mix of years in profession, gender, and race/ethnicity. At least one male participant for each strata was selected if males were present. Strata A and D did not have male participants; there were no male participants who fell into Strata D, and the male participant selected for Strata A was not able to participate in the study due to a natural disaster in their state. All participants who responded to the call to participate in Phase Two identified as male or female.

Participants were then selected based on race/ethnicity and librarians of color were selected when possible. Years in profession was then used to balance the strata to ensure that each strata included librarians at various stages of their career. In strata
containing more than four potential participants, participants were oversampled, meaning that more people than were needed were invited to participate in the qualitative phase.

On August 4, 2019, I sent an email to the potential participants with an overview of Phase Two, the timeline and estimated time commitment for participation, and an invitation to participate that included an informed consent (see Appendix E for Phase Two recruitment email and Appendix F for Phase Two informed consent). If they agreed to participate, they completed a Doodle poll indicating their availability for the first focus group interview. On August 8, 2019, I emailed participants who had signed up for a focus group through Doodle but had not signed a consent form. I also emailed participants who had done neither. On August 9, 2019, I emailed additional librarians from each strata if not all four librarians originally contacted had responded to either the Doodle poll or signed the consent form.

While my goal for the study was four librarians per strata, only two librarians who fell into Low Deference No Status agreed to participate in Phase Two and ultimately only one of those librarians was able to schedule a focus group. Due to the natural disaster in the Southern United States at the time of the study, the fourth participant who fell into High Deference No Status had to leave the study. A breakdown of participants by strata is presented in Table 1.
Table 1

Number of Participants by Strata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Deference Faculty Status</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Deference No Status</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Deference Faculty Status</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Deference No Status</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection. Data was collected through two writing prompts and two synchronous online focus groups. In this section I first provide details about both writing prompts followed by the details for both focus groups.

Writing prompts. The writing prompts provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own throughout the study. Participant reflection through journals or diaries has been noted in the literature as a complementary data collection technique to interviewing in qualitative research (Giraud, 1999; Harvey, 2011; Milburn, 2011). Cunningham (2012) found that written reflections were beneficial as they provided participants time to consider topics and generate further insights.

Writing prompts were completed in Qualtrics. I emailed the first writing prompt along with the consent form in August 2019 (see Appendix G for participant email and writing prompts). I sent the second writing prompt on September 8, 2019, following the first focus group (see Appendix G).
First writing prompt. For the first writing prompt I asked three questions:

1. Please describe your role in your library including the type of teaching that you do and other job responsibilities.

2. Reflect on your responses to the Librarian Behavior Survey. Do these still correctly reflect your behavior in relationships with disciplinary faculty? Please expand on any response now that you have the opportunity to expand beyond a yes/no answer.

3. How would you describe a successful librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship? Can you give an example of a successful librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship you’ve built during your career?

The questions provided me information on the participants’ professional work and provided space for them to discuss the deference statements outside of the yes/no dichotomy. Librarian behavior is situation dependent, so participants had an opportunity to provide more context to when and why they may exhibit deference in their interactions with disciplinary faculty. As this research explored deference behavior in the context of librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships, participants also discussed their perceptions of a successful librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship and provided an example of a successful relationship they have built in their career. Responses to the first writing prompt provided me with some context to how each participant approaches relationships with disciplinary faculty and insight into how they might exhibit deference behavior. The writing prompt did not inform the content or questions for the first focus group, although some participant statements from the writing prompts were brought up in the course of the interviews, especially where one-on-one interviews took place instead of focus groups. The writing prompts served as a data source and the data from the writing prompts was included in the first round of coding when initial codes were developed and recoded throughout the process.
Second writing prompt. The second writing prompt followed the first focus group interview. I asked participants two content questions:

1. Please write a reflection about any topics discussed in the focus groups. This can be based on the summary and your own focus group experience.

2. Please develop 1-2 questions that you would like to pose to other participants during the second focus group relating to librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships and/or academic librarian behavior. A combined list of questions will be developed and sent to you on September 23rd.

Participants responded to the second writing prompt after they received a summary of the first set of focus group discussions. The second writing prompt gave the participants a space to reflect and express concerns about the conversation from the first focus group. It also served as a member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as participants were asked to reflect on the focus group discussions. Participants also developed questions that they wanted to ask other librarians during the second focus group, which provided an opportunity for the participants to be part of the research process and engage fully in a conversation with peers about academic librarian deference behavior. A series of questions were developed from the writing prompt and sent to participants on September 24, 2019, prior to the second focus group. I also provided space in the second writing prompt for participants to provide their study pseudonym and to give me more information about their job descriptions for their participant bio.

Focus groups. There were two sets of online focus groups held four weeks apart. The online focus groups brought the participants together for small group discussion. I selected focus groups for three reasons. First, they allow a researcher to explore ideas in a group setting and gain different perspectives on the problem under study through the interactions of multiple participants (Abrams & Gaiser, 2017). Bringing together
teaching-focused librarians to discuss deference behavior helped us to co-construct an understanding of academic librarian deference behavior. Second, in focus groups the “interviewer is not in a position of power or influence” (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 6). Thus, I selected focus groups because of my own pre-understanding of academic librarian deference behavior and my strong opinions about the behavior in librarian work, as discussed in Chapter I and in more detail in the researcher stance section that follows. Focus groups helped to make my voice quieter and the participants’ voices louder. The third reason for choosing focus groups is that I was less interested in getting to know the individual experiences of teaching-focused librarians and more interested in bringing practitioners together to discuss the topic.

Focus groups are widely used in qualitative research (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Online focus groups have been conducted since the 1990s. Early online focus groups were held in internet chat rooms as synchronous text-only focus groups that relied on participants to type comments (Schneider, Kerwin, Frechtling, & Vivari, 2002). The criticisms of synchronous chat room focus groups is the limited interaction of participants, a higher no-show rate than face to face groups, exclusivity to the research because participants had to have an internet connection and computer, lack of non-verbal cues added issues of technical difficulties to the interview process, and limited depth in participant responses (Brüggen & Willems, 2009; Murgado-Armenteros, Torres-Ruiz, & Vega-Zamora, 2012; Schneider, et al., 2002). Much of the literature comparing face-to-face focus groups to online focus groups compares the traditional method to the text-only online method and does not compare traditional methods to online video focus groups (Abrams, Wang, Song, & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015; Brüggen & Willems, 2009;
Murgado-Armenteros et al., 2012; Schneider et al., 2002). More recent comparisons of traditional and online focus group methods have compared in-person to video conferencing focus groups (Abrams et al., 2015; Larkins, 2015).

In a 2015 study comparing face-to-face, video, and text-only focus groups, Larkins found that the audio-video groups compared favorably to the in-person groups although the interaction of participants in the video groups was less. Larkins (2015) noted that participants in the video groups were less likely to interrupt and respond to others’ comments. However, he also observed that “the actual information concerning the topics [he] was interested in was almost equal in the in-person and audio-video groups” (Larkins, 2015, p. 93). Abrams et al. (2015) had similar findings in their comparison of video and traditional focus groups. While they noted that the video format somewhat limited “spontaneous contributions by participants” (Abrams et al., 2015, p. 92) they concluded that “richness of data generated in online audio-visual focus groups was similar to that produced in face-to-face focus groups” (Abrams et al., 2015, p. 94).

In recent years researchers have been experimenting with Skype as a focus group tool, as it allows for synchronous audio-visual conferencing, recording, and features such as break-out groups (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016; Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014). Countering some of the earlier concerns about online focus groups (Abrams et al., 2015; Larkins, 2015), these researchers found that Skype provides equal levels of verbal and non-verbal cues as face-to-face interviews (Janghorban et al., 2014) and that the online environment did not limit or hinder rapport building with participants (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Given the extent people communicate online, online forums are becoming more accepted for focus group research.
(Abrams & Gaiser, 2017). Iacono et al. (2016) stated that video research methods such as synchronous online video focus groups can be embraced with confidence rather than caution.

For this study I conducted synchronous online focus groups in the video conferencing software Zoom©. Zoom© was selected because the participants did not have to create an account, the online session could be recorded, and Zoom offered integrated polling and screen sharing capability.

*First focus group.* In the first set of focus groups, participants were grouped by strata to transition from Phase One to Phase Two of the study. Grouping by strata provided space for participants who answered similarly to the survey questions to discuss academic librarian deference behavior together. Grouping by strata was helpful for me as the researcher to identify any trends among and across librarians with different perceived deference. In the first set of focus groups I conducted six focus groups interviews since participants in Strata A and C could not all meet at the same time. To ensure that everyone who agreed to participate was able, the first set of focus groups for Strata A and C were split into two focus group interviews. There were three one-on-one interviews conducted during the first set of focus groups. Two were conducted due to scheduling conflicts to ensure participation in the study, and one was conducted because there was only one participant in the strata. While focus groups were selected for the three reasons mentioned above, I moved forward with individual interviews to ensure that all the participants could participate in the second set of focus groups.

The first focus group began with group introductions, and then I guided the discussion using two activities that asked participants to respond to statements from
current literature on librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. During the first activity participants discussed the role of academic librarians on campus and their role in teaching. The statements presented to participants in the first activity mapped to the curricular and classroom paradigms in Cunningham’s (2012) Model of Nested Organizational Tensions, the two paradigms that may resonate most with teaching-focused academic librarians’ roles. For example, participants discussed the following statements:

- Academic librarians should develop a teacher orientation, where they pursue their own goals for student learning.
- Academic librarians should develop a service orientation where they focus on satisfying another faculty member’s goals for student learning.

Through the second activity, participants discussed academic librarian behavior and interactions with disciplinary faculty. These statements were taken from library literature that discussed deferent behavior of academic librarians (Downey, 2016; Given & Julien, 2005; Julien & Pecoskie, 2009). For example, participants responded to the following statement from Given and Julien (2005): Librarians “are afraid to say no or offend, preferring to stick with preconceived roles as nice people” (p. 35). I chose statements from the literature that I believed would foster good discussions with practitioners about their role on campus, how they navigate that role, and how they interact with disciplinary faculty. Additionally, the statements allowed me to connect to Cunningham’s (2012) theory without explicitly referring to the paradigms. The full moderator guide for the first focus group is in Appendix H.

Second focus group. In the second focus group, participants were grouped with members of different strata, providing an opportunity for the participants to speak with
librarians who answered differently than they did on the survey in Phase One. Mixing the strata also meant that participants had different experiences and discussions in the first focus group that they could bring into the second discussion. To determine the group make-up of the second set of focus groups, I sent a Doodle poll to all participants on August 30, 2019, and then selected the participants for each focus group based on availability while also ensuring a mix of strata. In the second set of focus groups, I conducted four focus groups each with three participants.

The second focus group began with group introductions where each participant also discussed why they wanted to participate in the study. I then asked six participant-generated questions developed from the second writing prompt. The questions were:

1. Do you feel that your position is tenuous and, if so, how does that impact your interaction with disciplinary faculty?
2. Do you think that having faculty status (or not) impacts the way teaching faculty interact with you? Does it impact how you interact with them?
3. If librarians aren’t explicitly showcasing their expertise, especially with information, and are just facilitators for external faculty, then why do they need faculty status?
4. What’s the library/librarian role in working with faculty to design research assignments for their courses, especially in the face of poor assignment design? How much influence do other librarians have with respect to assignment design when they work with disciplinary faculty?
5. Have you experienced disciplinary faculty claiming responsibility for Information Literacy on campus and leaving the library out of these conversations? If so, how has the library responded?
6. Outside of the classroom, what avenues do you pursue to solidify your campus’s awareness of the library as home to information literacy? If you did not have the one-shot, how would you inform your campus about the necessity of information literate students?
Following the questions, I asked participants to respond to statements from the literature from library scholars who support a more significant role for academic librarians on campus (Mavodza, 2011; Meulemans & Carr, 2013; Owusu-Ansah, 2004). For example, the following statement from Meulemans and Carr (2013) was discussed: Librarians must take equal, “and if necessary, primary agency in the construction of the [information literacy] learning environment for students” or else risk being “an automaton that serves the needs of faculty” (p. 88). The full moderator guide for the second focus group is in Appendix I.

**Data analysis.** All the focus group interviews were transcribed using a professional transcription service, GMR Transcription, that specializes in video focus group data. The focus group data and writing prompts were analyzed by developing codes. Codes are determined by a careful reading of and reflection on the meaning of a chunk of data; thus, coding is a method of discovery (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). I used inductive coding rather than a priori coding as it is considered “better grounded empirically” than a priori coding (Miles et al., 2014, p. 81). Inductive coding means that I did not create codes from the literature and map the data to those codes but instead let codes emerge naturally and mapped codes from the data to the literature. This process helped to ensure that I did not try to fit data to a theory unnaturally.

Before I began coding the first writing prompt and focus groups, I watched the recording of each focus group then read over the transcript of each focus group. Then I listened to the focus group recordings while reading the transcripts in order to immerse myself in the data set. I then followed Krueger and Casey’s (2015) “classic analysis
strategy” (p. 151) for analyzing focus group data. This is a low-tech coding process that “make[s] analysis a visual and concrete process” (Krueger & Casey, 2015, p. 152).

**Coding focus group one.** To set up the process I numbered each line of the transcripts from the first set of focus groups and then printed each strata’s transcripts on different color paper. In Krueger and Casey’s (2015) process data is first organized by interview question. To set up the coding process, I first organized the data from the first writing prompt and first focus group by the posed questions; I put all participant responses from across the writing prompt and six focus groups under specific headings. For example, I organized the data by answers to the writing prompt question about successful librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships and by the different sets of statements and quotes in the focus group interview. Organizing the data in this way gave me another opportunity to look at the entire data set.

I categorized participant quotes strata by strata, starting with Low Deference and then analyzing High Deference so that I could compare answers by strata and faculty status. An illustration of this process is available in Image 1.

![Image 1. Coding process for low deference interviews.](image-url)
Once I organized the data for a strata, I coded the data using the In Vivo Coding method, which “uses words or short phrases from the participant’s own language in the data record as codes” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 74). I followed the same process for all four strata. After the first round of analysis I had 80 codes. Examples of these codes included leadership, faculty territory, hard to say no, babysitter, faculty doesn’t value our knowledge or subject expertise, the faculty member is expecting an assistant, disappointed in the deference mindset, faculty are not magical beings, and librarians are their own professionals. After I analyzed and applied codes for each strata, I wrote comparison notes comparing faculty status within strata and then comparing high and low deference.

After comparing the strata, I reviewed the data for all strata and began pattern coding, where I grouped the 80 codes into smaller numbers of categories, themes, or constructs (Miles et al., 2014). After using pattern coding on the first set of focus group data, I had 16 codes. The codes are outlined in Table 2, which also indicates with which strata the codes appeared.

**Coding focus group two.** When analyzing the second set of focus group data, I first noted after each focus group interview if I felt that codes from the first set of focus groups were discussed in the second set of focus groups. I kept track of the codes by hand in a chart, which I reproduced from the original in Table 3.
### Table 2

*Initial Codes after Focus Group One*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>High Deference Strata</th>
<th>Low Deference Strata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Battle</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict in Libraries</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference Causes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference Examples</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference Implications</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference Leadership Impact</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Perceptions of librarian as teacher</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and power</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of onboarding/development</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian faculty status</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians not comfortable communicating</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians expertise</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long game/game</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS lacking</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positions as tenuous/precarious</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Focus Group Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict in Libraries</td>
<td>x x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference Causes</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference Examples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deference Implications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deference Leadership Impact</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Perceptions of librarian as teacher</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender and power</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of onboarding/development</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian faculty status</td>
<td>x x x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarians not comfortable communicating</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarians expertise</td>
<td>x x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long game/game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS lacking</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positions as tenuous/precarious</td>
<td>x x x x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the second set of focus group interviews were transcribed, I numbered each line of the transcripts and printed each transcript on different color paper. I then cut the transcripts and organized the data using the first set of 16 codes. For the data that did not fit under one of these codes, I used In Vivo Coding (Miles et al., 2014) and developed six
new codes, which included librarian confidence, institutional culture/perception, faculty as peer, service v support, justify existence/show value, and changing profession. After coding the focus group two data, I had 22 codes.

**Final coding and analysis.** After coding the data from focus group two, I combined all the data from focus group one and two, organizing the data under headings for each code. I then used pattern coding (Miles et al., 2014) to reorganize the data into a smaller set of codes. At the end of the coding process I had 17 codes, which included:

1. Battle
2. Conflict in Libraries
3. Deference Causes
4. Deference Examples
5. Deference Implications
6. Deference Leadership Impact
7. Faculty Perceptions of Librarians as Teachers
8. Institutional Culture
9. Lack of Onboarding/Development
10. Librarian Confidence
11. Librarian Faculty Status
12. Librarians not comfortable communicating with faculty
13. Librarians subject expertise
14. Long Game/Game
15. MLIS Lacking
16. Ph.D.

17. Position as tenuous/precarious

After finalizing these 17 codes, I began another round of pattern coding (Miles et al., 2014). I reduced the data by relating concepts to each other to form larger codes, which became the major themes of the research. This is when I coded the data specifically for the act of deference and deference as a play strategy. The four major themes that emerged from the analysis, which are discussed in depth in Chapter IV, were:

1. Institutional Culture’s Impact on Librarian-Disciplinary Faculty Relationships

2. Emotional Stressors Impacting Librarians’ Work

3. Librarians’ Strategies for Negotiating Relationships with Disciplinary Faculty

4. Underlying Causes of Academic Librarian Deference Behavior

**Inference Quality**

Inferences in mixed methods research “are conclusions or interpretations drawn from the separate quantitative and qualitative strands of a study as well as across the quantitative and qualitative strands, called ‘meta-inferences’” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 412). Inference quality in mixed methods research is using strategies to address potential issues in data collection, data analysis, and the interpretations that might compromise the merging or connecting of the quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). While there is an argument for an integrative framework to ensure inference quality in mixed methods research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) stated that because mixed methods research involves quantitative and
qualitative data, approaches to validity should be discussed for both strands separately. Because I utilized the participant selection variant of the explanatory sequential design I did not bring findings together in the final analysis. Thus, I have separated the discussion of inference quality by each phase of the study in order to provide an in-depth discussion of trustworthiness as the inference quality standard for qualitative research.

**Phase One: Quantitative Validity and Reliability**

Validity in quantitative research refers to “the extent to which a measure can be shown to measure what it purports or intends to measure” (Cramer & Howitt, 2019, p. 178). Construct validity “addresses the issue of how well whatever is purported to be measured actually has been measured” (Lavrakas, 2008, p. 135). While there are numerous types of construct validity (Drost, 2011), I focused on face validity and content validity. For surveys to have high construct validity they must first have “face validity,” meaning that the survey “appear[s] on the surface (or “at face value”) to be measuring what it purports to measure” (Lavrakas, 2008. p. 135). Content validity is “a qualitative type of validity where the domain of the concept is made clear and the analyst judges whether the measures fully represent the domain” (Bollen as cited by Drost, 2011, p. 118). To support both face and content validity, I asked academic librarian practitioners ($n = 13$) prior to the study to review the deference scale section of the survey in order to determine if the instrument appeared to measure the construct of academic librarian deference behavior. This review took place from March 22-April 5, 2019. The practitioners consisted of various types of librarians including instruction librarians, technical services librarians, and a library administrator. Practitioners were also a mix of
ranks including contract-renewable, tenure-track, tenured, and non-faculty librarians as well as one MLS graduate student.

To measure face validity, I asked reviewers to describe the purpose of the scale in their own words. To measure content validity, I presented reviewers with the purpose of the scale and the definition of deference behavior. I then asked them to respond to three questions:

1. Based on the definition of deference behavior, do these questions effectively get at deference behavior in the context of library instruction? Please explain your answer.
2. Are there any questions that should be reworded? Please explain your answer.
3. Are there any questions that should be removed? Please explain your answer.

The practitioners who reviewed the scale indicated that the scale had face validity. They indicated in their own words that the scale was meant to measure if academic librarians engage in deference behavior in their work and if library faculty perceive imbalances in status between themselves and other faculty. The reviewers also indicated that the scale held content validity, determining that the questions ask specifically about deference behavior based on the definition of the term. Some reviewers did note that some questions had confusing language and that there was some repetition that seemed unnecessary. Based on the practitioner review I reduced the number of questions in the deference scale from eight to six and fixed language where wording was confusing. These changes are reflected in the current scale provided in Appendix D, which was used in the study.

The survey instrument used in Phase One was researcher-developed; thus, reliability was not established prior to its use in the study. As this instrument is a scale
which measures the same variable at one point in time, reliability refers to consistency of the items across the scale (Johnson, 2018). For this study, Cronbach’s Alpha was run to test the internal consistency of the scale questions for this particular set of respondents.

Considered the most common measure of internal consistency (Johnson, 2018), Cronbach’s Alpha provides an average of correlations to provide an estimate of reliability ranging between 0 and 1, giving researchers a one number estimate of a scale’s internal consistency. Sufficiently high correlations have a Cronbach’s Alpha above .70 (Johnson, 2018). For this study, the scale has an alpha of .64, indicating a moderate internal consistency.

**Phase Two: Qualitative Validity**

Creswell (2013) discussed validation in qualitative research as “an attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings as best described by the researcher and the participants” (pp 249-250). Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to qualitative validation as trustworthiness and outlined four categories for trustworthiness in qualitative research—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Reflexivity (Jones et al., 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018) should also be considered in the trustworthiness of qualitative research.

**Credibility.** For Lincoln and Guba (1985) credibility is parallel to the idea of internal consistency in quantitative research. They stated that member checking “is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). Member checks are also imperative to constructivist research as meaning is co-created with researcher and participant. Member checks are used as “both a way for participants to verify their thoughts and ideas and as a way to elaborate on the findings” (Jones et al., 2014, p. 36). I
asked participants to react at various stages of the research. In writing prompt 1, they responded to their own deference scale questions and provided their reflection and a discussion of their answers outside the yes/no binary. In writing prompt 2, they were provided summaries of the first set of focus groups, which provided them a space to reflect on the first focus group outside of their own interview. They also generated questions for the second focus group, thus, becoming part of the research process. Participants were also asked to react to the final themes of the study in the context of their own work and the library profession. The final member check, discussed more in Chapter V, indicated that participants’ ideas from the study aligned with the themes and that the participants believed the results of the study were important to the field.

**Transferability.** Transferability refers to the ability of a reader to transfer the information from a study’s findings to their own situation. Qualitative researchers must be sure to fully describe a setting, participant, or theme/finding so that a reader can easily make connections between research and practical application in their setting. Referred to by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as “thick description,” (p. 316), this was achieved by providing enough details in the description of the findings for teaching-focused librarians reading the study to determine if the findings are meaningful to their own library and practice. As these are focus groups, full descriptions of the setting was not useful. Full descriptions of the participants’ roles and library environments were provided by the participants because I felt they were more qualified to discuss their role; using their own words also brought their voice into the dissertation (see Chapter IV). The use of participants’ own words from writing prompts and focus group interviews also added to the description of the themes and findings.
**Dependability and confirmability.** Dependability and confirmability both refer to the confidence that findings are derived from the data and not researcher bias (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). To achieve these, an audit trail was kept detailing all decisions made during the research process. The audit trail included details about the process used to create the strata and decisions made during the quantitative phase about which participants to select for the qualitative phase. The audit trail also included a description of the full analysis process and a coding audit that included coding definitions.

I also kept a researcher journal that included my reflections on the research process. The researcher journal included the processes of “jotting” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 93) and “memoing” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 95), which are both ways of reflecting on the analysis process as it is happening. Jotting is a way to “hold a researcher’s fleeting and emergent reflections on issues that emerge during fieldwork and especially data analysis” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 94). I used jotting while reading through the writing prompts and during the focus groups in order to keep track of words, phrases, and scenarios discussed by multiple participants. This helped me remember conversations from one focus group to the next and recall comments participants made in the first focus group that related to conversations in the second focus group. Memoing is providing “extended narrative that documents the researcher’s reflections and thinking processes about the data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 95). Memoing is a way to begin synthesizing data during analysis (Miles et al., 2014). I used memoing as I went through each coding cycle to keep track of the codes, coding definitions, and emerging themes. Through jotting and memoing I was able to reflect on my analysis and refer to my thoughts throughout the process.
**Reflexivity.** Reflexivity is about being aware of my role in the research process and the assumptions I bring to the process so that I avoid bringing preconceived notions into the data analysis (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Traditionally qualitative researchers discuss reflexivity in terms of epoch and bracketing. Epoch is an ongoing process through which a researcher begins to understand their own pre-understandings in relation to the topic under study (Jones et al., 2014). Once they are identified through epoch, the researcher puts them aside through the process of bracketing (Jones et al., 2014). However, Jones et al. argued that bracketing may be impossible. Bracketing also does not align with constructivism since constructivists hold that knowledge is created by the interactions of the different subjectivities of researcher and participants (Rockenbach, Walker, & Luzader, 2012). While I went through the process of epoch throughout the study using the researcher journal, I constructed meaning with my participants; thus, I did not go through the process of bracketing, which would have essentially put myself, my experiences, and my ideas aside. Instead I used the process of bridling, which has been discussed as an alternative to bracketing (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nystrom, 2008).

Dahlberg et al. (2008) stated that “neither researchers nor anyone else can cut off one’s pre-understanding” but that pre-understanding can be “bridled from having an uncontrolled effect on the understanding” (p. 128). They use the metaphor of bridling a horse to explain the process. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s threads of intentionality, which “connect us with the world which could never be cut off but could be tightened and loosened” (Merleau-Ponty as cited by Ellett, 2011, p. 5), a horse rider “has the ability to tighten and slacken the reins on the horse” (p. 6). Accordingly, I could tighten or loosen the bridle on my pre-understanding throughout the research process. Bridling
covers aspects of bracketing that restrain pre-understanding, which may lead to a misunderstanding of the data. Dahlberg et al. (2008) note the main difference between bracketing and bridling.

While “bracketing” is directed backwards, putting all energy into fighting pre-understanding and keeping it in check “back there,” not letting it affect what is happening “here and now,” “bridling” has a more positive tone to it as it aims to direct the energy into the open and [a] respective attitude that allows the phenomenon to present itself. (p. 130)

In a discussion of using bridling to understand persistence in art teachers, Ellett (2011) stated that bridling allowed her own “thoughts and experiences to run parallel with those of my participants” (p. 6). Ellett stated, “bridling let me concentrate on my participants while at the same time giving me that place I need to have my voice heard” and that she was “better able to hear the individual stories” of her participants (p. 6). The process of epoch and bridling was used in this study as they better align with a constructivist study that aims to co-construct meaning with participants. I recognized my own beliefs about deference and librarian behavior very early on in the study and wrote about my beliefs in my researcher journal. I then reviewed that journal entry before each focus group. Bridling allowed me to be actively involved in the focus groups and interact with the participants as a fellow librarian. The image of bridling a horse was at the forefront of my mind during the focus groups; I could sense when I could let go of the reigns and became a participant and when I needed to pull back the bridle and let the participants take over and not put my preunderstanding at the forefront of the discussion.

**Ethical Considerations**

There are numerous ethical considerations when conducting mixed methods research. As part of the application process for Institutional Review Board (IRB)
approval, I developed an informed consent, which outlined the purpose and methods of the research for potential participants. I included two consent forms, one for the quantitative phase (Appendix C) and one for the qualitative phase (Appendix F). I used two consent forms, since not everyone participating in the quantitative phase would want to be interviewed and not everyone who agreed to participate in the qualitative phase would be selected. The informed consent for both phases discussed issues of anonymity and confidentiality. I could not guarantee anonymity for participants in this study because IP addresses were attached to the electronic survey. Additionally, I knew the identity of participants in the quantitative phase if they elected to participate in the qualitative phase. Because focus groups were used in the qualitative phase, participants were not anonymous to other participants in the study. I worked to maintain confidentiality of participants by providing secure storage for all data. GMR Transcription Services also guaranteed confidentiality through their service. I also used pseudonyms during analysis and writing to protect identities of the participants from a larger audience.

Researcher Stance

The three stories I presented at the beginning of Chapter I illustrated how some of my colleagues perceive their work, their role in the classroom, and their status on campus. Their perceptions of themselves, and what I took this to mean about their perceptions of all academic librarians, began frustrating me well before I was charged with overseeing a library instruction program and supervising teaching-focused librarians. As a new library faculty member walking onto campus 13 years ago, I was ready to spread the gospel about information literacy and everything it could do to help students succeed. I immediately began reaching out to programs to discuss integrating
information literacy into their curriculum; I added three new credit courses within five years. When I became a library liaison to the Criminology & Criminal Justice Department, I met with the department chair and other faculty to tell them what I could offer; I taught 20 course-integrated sessions the second semester I took over as the liaison, which was up from three taught the previous academic year. So, if I could meet with disciplinary faculty and collaborate with them on curriculum, and give my opinions about research assignments--why could my colleagues not do so? Why did they dismiss their own librarian expertise for the preferences of disciplinary faculty and to what I saw as the detriment of students?

When I began supervising four library faculty members and overseeing a substantial library instruction program that included seven credit courses and three large-scale course-integrated programs, I became more cognizant of displays of deference behavior by the librarians in the department because I believed deference behavior negatively impacted our goals of integrating information literacy into campus curriculum. I also believed deference behavior would negatively affect these librarians’ ability to build partnerships with disciplinary faculty. When my faculty spoke about their work or their role from a place of deference, I tried to realign their thinking. I asked them to think through what they believed was the best course of action in a situation, determine why, and then develop an action plan to achieve that goal.

Recently I listened proudly when a librarian in my department shared a success story. When approached by a disciplinary faculty member to deliver a library workshop during week two of the semester, she responded to him by outlining five reasons why students would benefit from coming to the library later in the semester once they had a
topic for their major assignment. She received a message back agreeing with her position and worked with the faculty member to schedule the best time. That would not have happened a year ago--she would have taught the class knowing the students were not benefitting as much from her teaching (while complaining about it). She told this story with a smile, and there was an evident growth in her own confidence to push forward her own information literacy goals.

Reflecting on myself as a researcher and how I have come to this topic has brought me to reflect on the influence my mother has had on my approach to leadership. My mother left college one year before graduation to marry my father, then followed him to Alaska for his first deployment in the Navy. When they divorced, we moved to Virginia, and she got a job in a government warehouse driving forklifts. She went back to college at night; I remember sitting with her in her classes coloring while she took notes, and I remember watching her graduate. After college, she moved out of the warehouse into a secretarial job and from that job to a department head and from there to a unit manager. At the end of her career with the government, my mother had earned a significant leadership role. When I was growing up, she would come home from work and tell me a story of what a female co-worker had done in a meeting or at an event, explain why she felt it was the wrong thing to do if you wanted to get promoted as a woman, and what to do instead. My mother taught me how to succeed, and when I failed, she taught me resilience. Being a woman in leadership in 2020 is certainly different from my mother’s work experience. However, much of her advice is relevant, and I owe her a lot. Her best lessons were about how to speak my mind professionally, how to stand up for myself, and how to know when to retreat. Seeing colleagues engage in deference
behavior because they do not have a Ph.D., or out of fear of making a disciplinary faculty member mad, concerns me because I was taught the opposite.

I come to this topic with strong ideas about how librarians should do their work and the kind of partnerships disciplinary faculty and librarians should have in order to best support students. I see the librarian role as equal to that of any other faculty member regardless of degree attained. I see academic librarians as essential to the educational mission of higher education institutions, as people who hold expertise in information literacy who should be doing more than serving the disciplinary faculty, and as educators who should be taking a lead role in the classroom. I also recognize that not everyone shares my view of librarians.

I approached the study of academic librarian deference behavior as a problem in the profession that needs to be fixed because I see it as a response to the minoritized identity we hold on campus, which is limiting our potential to support student academic success. Not all academic librarians hold these views, and because my beliefs about our role are solidified, I had to be careful about how my strong beliefs influence how I interacted with and responded to my participants, especially as I was in a position of power as the researcher. Because I began this study viewing deference ultimately as a problem, I was careful in listening to participants about the use of deference as a play tactic. I worked to be aware of how I responded to participants discussing their experiences with deference behavior in their interactions with disciplinary faculty.

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter I, I came into the researcher space as a senior faculty member who has earned tenure and promotion to full professor. I have published and presented nationally and internationally on information literacy and written a book on
information literacy practice. I brought my experiences into the interview process, and I worked to bridle my practitioner expertise as I listened to and talked with librarians at varying stages in their careers.

**Chapter Summary**

Through this research I sought to gain an understanding of how deference behavior manifests in the work of academic librarians. In this chapter, I provided a rationale for mixed methods research and the explanatory sequential design with participant selection variant. I then discussed the worldviews guiding development of the study, including post-positivism in Phase One and constructivism in Phase Two. I provided an overview of the methods for each phase of the study, an overview of the analysis process, a discussion of inference quality, and a discussion of ethical considerations. I concluded with my researcher stance. In the next chapter, I present the study findings and provide answers to the research questions.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this mixed method study, I explored academic librarian deference behavior in order to understand how the behavior manifests. The study builds on the literature exploring librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships in higher education by focusing on an issue—the manifestation of deference behavior in the work of teaching-focused academic librarians. I collected both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the following research questions related to academic librarian deference behavior:

The overarching mixed methods question guiding the study was:

Q1 How does deference behavior manifest in the work of teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States?

The Phase One quantitative question was:

Q1a What are the patterns of deference behavior in teaching-focused librarians?

The Phase Two qualitative questions were:

Q1b What factors influence librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships?

Q1c How do teaching-focused librarians negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty?

Q1d What are the underlying causes of academic librarian deference behavior?

In this chapter, I present the quantitative analysis, introduce the qualitative participants, and present the qualitative analysis.
Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative Data Summary

I sent a national survey to potential participants through listservs, social media, and personal communication. The survey was completed by 139 academic librarians. The response was satisfactory given the breadth of participants in terms of demographics such as years in profession and geographic location.

Gender and race. Of the 139 participants, 118 identify as female, 15 as male, one as gender variant/non-conforming, and 5 participants preferred not to reveal their gender identity. While 87.0% of the participants identified their race as Caucasian/White, 14 librarians of color participated in the study with various racial/ethnic identities indicated. Three participants preferred not to answer the question about race/ethnicity. There were no male librarians of color in the study. The breakdown of participants by race/ethnic identity is presented in Table 4. The participant population is consistent with the demographic breakdown of the library profession with women comprising 84.0% of the participant population. 85.0% of the participants who identify as women also identify as white.
Table 4

*Race/Ethnicity Identify of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian American</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian American, Caucasian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean Black</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian, Hispanic/Latinx</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian, Native American</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latinx</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish, since plenty of white people claim I’m not really white</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age and years in profession.** Most of the participants were age 31-35 with a majority in their late 20s to early 30s. Only 2.2% of participants were age 20-25, 7.9% were age 51-55 and 10.8% of participants were over 55. Participants included librarians who have been in the profession over 20 years (*n* = 19; 13.7%), while most of the participants have been in the profession under five years (*n* = 55; 38.8%). The breakdown of age of participants and years in profession is presented in Table 5.
Table 5

*Years in Profession by Age Range*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>11-15 years</th>
<th>16-20 years</th>
<th>6-10 years</th>
<th>Over 20 years</th>
<th>Under 5 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 55</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Degrees obtained.** 62.6% of the participants hold an MLS and 26.6% hold an MLS in addition to another master’s degree. Seven participants hold an MA/MS with no MLS. Two participants hold an MA/MS, MLS and a Ph.D., while two others hold a Ph.D. with no MLS.

**Faculty status.** Of the 139 librarians participating in the study, 70.5% hold faculty status \(n = 98\), and 29.5% \(n = 41\) do not hold faculty status. Faculty rank varies among the librarians with faculty status; while the traditional ranks exist, there were 20 rank variations listed by participants. A breakdown of faculty rank of participants with faculty status is presented in Table 6.
Table 6

*Faculty Rank*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Instructor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-month administrative faculty</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian (equivalent to assistant professor)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Librarian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinguished Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Librarian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian II</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian IV</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Assistant Librarian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty with no Rank/Title</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Faculty benefits.** Benefits of faculty status in higher education include opportunities to earn tenure and take sabbatical leave as well as the opportunity to serve on campus-wide committees and be involved in campus decisions through committee voting. Of the 98 librarians who hold faculty status, 61.0% (60) are provided both tenure and sabbatical benefits, while 17.0% (17) are provided neither faculty benefit. Of the 98
librarians with faculty status, .07% (7) were provided the benefit of tenure but not sabbatical, and 14.0% (14) were provided the benefit of sabbatical but not tenure. All the librarians with faculty status could serve on campus committees. However, when it came to committee voting rights, 21.0% indicated that they only had voting rights on some committees; one participant noted having no voting rights on committees.

Librarians without faculty status also indicated that they serve on campus committees, with only four noting that librarians do not serve on campus committees. Of the 36 librarians without faculty status serving on committees, only 10 had voting rights on all committees, while 18 could vote on some committees; 8 reported no committee voting rights.

**Research Question 1a**

Q1a What are the patterns of deference behavior in teaching-focused librarians?

The quantitative research question sought to determine patterns of deference behavior in teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States. I used non-probability sampling, so these responses were not representative of the entire population of teaching-focused academic librarians. However, the results showed patterns in deference behavior in the sample. Of the 139 participants, 35.3% (49) presented high deference, and 64.7% (90) presented low deference behavior. While there were more librarians in this sample with low deference, the results suggested the existence of deference behavior in this sample of teaching focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions. A breakdown of the demographics by deference range and deference score is presented in Table 7.
Table 7

Demographics by Deferece Range and Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deferece Range</th>
<th>Deference Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Gender Variant</th>
<th>Librarians of Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Librarians in their late twenties to mid-thirties presented the highest deference, and the highest deference scores are seen in newer librarians across age ranges. Additionally, more assistant professors present high deference behavior than any other traditional faculty rank. More librarians present low deference behavior than high regardless of status. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of librarians with high deference by years in profession, age, faculty status, and rank.
Typical deference behavior. Questions two and three on the Academic Librarian Behavior Scale asked librarians about their typical behavior in their interactions with disciplinary faculty when planning library instruction sessions. Twenty-four percent of participants answered yes to both questions, indicating that they typically cede power when planning instruction sessions and typically defer even if the disciplinary faculty member they are working with has a limited or outdated understanding of the current
The highest number of yes answers to these questions are seen from librarians who have been in the profession for 10 years or less; 48.0% typically cede power when planning information literacy sessions, while 34.0% indicate that they defer to disciplinary faculty even in the face of that person having a limited or outdated understanding (see Table 8).

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Deference Behavior</th>
<th>Typically Defer Even When Faculty Have Limited Understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Typically Cede Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 (71.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Librarians with high deference typically cede power and defer to disciplinary faculty more than those with low deference. When broken down by faculty status and deference range, the data indicate that a higher percentage of librarians with faculty status typically cede and defer than those without faculty status (see Table 9).
Table 9

Typical Deference Behavior by Deference Range and Faculty Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deference Range</th>
<th>Cede</th>
<th>Defer</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Faculty Status</th>
<th>Cede</th>
<th>Defer</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
<td>73.00%</td>
<td>67.00%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deference and faculty relationships.** Questions one and six on the Academic Librarian Behavior Scale asked about librarians’ perceptions of their relationship to disciplinary faculty. These questions asked if librarians saw their role as serving disciplinary faculty or if they perceived themselves as subordinate to disciplinary faculty. 46.0% of the participants answered no to both questions, while 21.0% answered yes to both questions (see Table 10). The highest number of yes answers to both questions are seen in librarians who have been in the profession for 10 years or less; 48.0% of these librarians perceive themselves as subordinate to disciplinary faculty, and 32.0% see their role as serving the disciplinary faculty.
Librarians with high deference perceive themselves as servile and subordinate more so than those with low deference. Across ranges, more librarians see their role as serving disciplinary faculty than they see themselves as subordinate to them (see Table 11). When broken down by faculty status, the data indicate that librarians with and without faculty status have similar perceptions of their role as serving disciplinary faculty. However, a smaller percentage of librarians with faculty status see themselves as subordinate to disciplinary faculty. More librarians with high deference indicate that they feel their role is in service to disciplinary faculty and that they are subordinate to them. When broken down by faculty status and deference range, the data indicate that faculty status may play a role in librarians’ perceptions of their relationship to disciplinary faculty, especially when it comes to perceptions of being subordinate. However, a higher percentage of librarians who fall into the low deference with faculty status strata perceive their role as serving the disciplinary faculty than those with low deference but no faculty status.
Table 11

*Relationship to Faculty by Deference Range and Faculty Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deference Range</th>
<th>Serving</th>
<th>Subordinate</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Faculty Status</th>
<th>Serving</th>
<th>Subordinate</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>53.00%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>49.00%</td>
<td>36.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deference as a play strategy.** Questions four and five on the Academic Librarian Behavior Scale asked participants if they had deferred to disciplinary faculty learning goals or ceded power to disciplinary faculty as a strategy to open dialogue about student learning and ensure they were able to teach students. These questions aimed to determine if librarians used deference as a play strategy. The data indicated that 58.0% of participants both cede power to ensure that they can teach students and defer to disciplinary faculty in order to open up dialogue about student learning, suggesting a strategic use of deference behavior (see Table 12).
Table 12

*Patterns of Deference as a Play Strategy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defer to Open Dialogue about Student Learning</th>
<th>Cede Power to Ensure Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52 (37.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deference range and faculty status.** While a higher percentage of librarians with high deference indicate using deference as a play strategy, librarians with low deference are also using deference strategically; 40.0% of low deference librarians indicated ceding power and deferring to disciplinary faculty in order to push forward their own information literacy work. The data suggest that those without faculty status regardless of deference range may have to use deference as a play strategy more than those with faculty status (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Deference as Play Strategy by Range and Faculty Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deference Range</th>
<th>Defer to Open Dialogue</th>
<th>Cede Power to Ensure Teaching</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Faculty Status</th>
<th>Defer to Open Dialogue</th>
<th>Cede Power to Ensure Teaching</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>98.0%</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Patterns of play.** When the answers to all the scale questions are compared, the data show that a higher percentage of participants answered yes to questions related to deference as play (questions four and five) than to questions about typical behavior or their perceptions of their relationship to faculty as servile or subordinate. Overall, only 21.0% of participants answered yes to questions one and six, and only 24.0% answered yes to questions two and three. However, 58.0% of all participants answered yes to questions four and five. Tables 14-16 present the percentage of participants who answered yes to each scale question broken down by deference range, faculty status, and years in profession. The tables show a continued pattern of a higher percentage of participants answering yes to the scale questions related to deference as play.

Table 14

*Deference as Play Strategy Comparing Deference Range*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Question</th>
<th>Deference Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defer to Open Dialogue about Learning</td>
<td>98.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cede power to Ensure Teaching</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically Cede Power</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically Defer</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

*Deference as Play Strategy Comparing Faculty Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Question</th>
<th>Faculty Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holds Faculty Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defer to Open Dialogue about Learning</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cede power to Ensure Teaching</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically Cede Power</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically Defer</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16

*Deference as Play Strategy Comparing Years in Profession*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Question</th>
<th>Years in Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Years or Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defer to Open Dialogue about Learning</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cede power to Ensure Teaching</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically Cede Power</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically Defer</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Analysis

Twelve librarians participated in two sets of focus groups and completed two writing prompts and a final reflection for the qualitative phase. I selected participants based on deference range, faculty status, and where possible, years in profession, gender, and race/ethnicity. In this section I present detailed information about the Phase Two participants. I then provide a discussion of the major themes that emerged from the data and provide answers to the research questions.

Participant Summary

This section provides demographic information about the Phase Two participants (see Table 17) followed by a brief description of each participants’ work. These descriptions were written by the participants because I felt they were more qualified to discuss their role and library environment.
### Table 17

**Phase Two Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Deference Range</th>
<th>Faculty Status</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in Profession</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>U.S. Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becca</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>West Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Mid-West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>North East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian/Asian American</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rifke</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>North East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Mid-West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.J.</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jared</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>North East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanche</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>West Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cora</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>North East</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Becca. I work for a large public state university with FTE 25,000 students. We have a single, main library staffed by approximately 15 faculty-status librarians and 50 staff. Our teaching is provided mainly through one-shot sessions delivered by subject librarians, who also provide reference services. My teaching is mostly one-shots, and I am also available to consult with students to support their academic work. I also work with faculty to support their work as teachers (e.g., finding texts, developing resources) and to support their work as researchers (e.g., reference, literature reviewing). I staff several reference transaction areas including our reference desk and chat reference. I serve on many committees and taskforces, at the unit, library, and university level.

Sam. I work at a mid-sized state university with approximately 10,000 undergrads and 900 grad students. The library is an academic department and is made up of tenure track faculty librarians, academic staff librarians, support staff, and a library director reporting directly to the Provost. I am a tenured librarian and work mostly with public services including instruction and outreach. I teach many one-shot courses to both undergrad and grad students and have had experiences as an embedded librarian. Because we are an academic department, we rotate on and off various departmental, campus, and system committees. We are also peer-governed and are considered as teaching faculty, eligible for the same promotions as other faculty on campus.

Lucy. I work at a state school in a rural area. We have approximately 3,200 students and offer mostly associates degrees along with some 4-year bachelors with one online master’s program. My library has five full-time librarians and five support staff. I am one of our library’s main teachers of bibliographic instruction and serve as liaison to our Social Science and Criminal Justice departments. While a lot of the instruction I do is
for classes in these areas, I do teach other classes as needed since our staff is small. My liaison duties require me to perform collection development in these areas. I also serve as chair of our library assessment team, which requires me to organize and conduct ongoing assessment of our resources and services. In this role I am required to compile an annual assessment report which maps our goals and outcomes to the college’s strategic plan and demonstrates our value. Additionally, I am the coordinator for our library’s government documents collection, as we are a federal depository.

**Fox.** My institution has approximately a 44,000 FTE and is in a large city. We have two library locations; there are nine librarians at my location. Five of these librarians cover reference and provide instruction. I am a Research Services Librarian on the Social Sciences Team. My work includes delivering orientations, instruction for undergraduates in their first semester, and instruction for doctoral students.

**Rifke.** I work at a medium-sized doctorate-granting public university. We have a single library, which is also medium-sized, on campus. All the librarians are staff, and my department head strongly values undergraduate instruction. I am liaison librarian to seven science areas including physical, life, and health sciences. Most of my instruction consists of one-shots in undergraduate courses, ranging from 100 to 400 level. In a few classes, I might present two or three sessions in sequence, and, occasionally, I teach standalone workshops on scientific information tools. I also staff a general reference desk, provide research consults, and select books in my subject areas. As staff I don’t have many leadership options in the library as most ongoing committees are commonly led by administrators.
Eric. I am a Research and Instruction librarian at a small liberal arts college with under 900 FTE. I am one of the 3.5 FTE librarians; the library also has 2.5 FTE staff. In my role I oversee library orientations, instruction, and staff the reference desk. I also teach one credit-bearing class per semester and serve on the core curriculum committee. Additionally, I co-chair a state consortium advisory group for research and instruction librarians.

Olivia. My library serves two institutions with a combined FTE of approximately 6,500. Both institutions are Ph.D.-granting with “minimal research activity” according to Carnegie classifications. My library has 16 full-time librarians with master’s degrees, four part-time degreed reference librarians, and several non-degreed library staff. My job as Online Learning Librarian is within the Research and Instruction department, which are the only librarians who do teaching or reference. I share on-call reference, research consultation, and information literacy instruction duties with my colleagues. Typically, all librarians in my department teach a one-shot information literacy session to each section of the Writing 100 class at both institutions. I am also the liaison to Education and teach all the graduate level Education info lit sessions. Our liaison-specific duties revolve around communication with departments and faculty and some collection development. My job title reflects the other large portion of my duties--I am responsible for the online learning at our library, including Libguides, video tutorials, synchronous and asynchronous online learning techniques, and other types of interactive learning objects.

E.J. My institution is around 6,000 FTE; we have 5 physical floors in our building and nine librarians. Over the past 5 years I’ve been the primary librarian responsible for first-year instruction. We’ve constructed a three-part first-year instruction
program that focuses on library familiarity and information literacy concepts. I’m also responsible for embedded librarianship and instruction within upper-level courses for which I’m a departmental liaison. For the last two years, I have served in an administrative role as the Director.

**Jared.** I work at a masters-level institution with approximately 8,200 students. We have many commuter students and are part of one of the largest systems in the country. My daily work involves instruction and reference. I provide instruction and reference services to undergraduates, mainly in the social sciences fields. I also sit on a few campus-wide committees in addition to chairing a committee of our campus governance organization. I am currently pursuing a Ph.D. in education.

**Blanche.** I work in a state university with an approximate enrollment of 14,500 on four teaching sites. The library has 18 faculty librarians and 40 library staff; I work in Special Collections with three faculty and six staff. I oversee the reading room/reference, conduct all the library instruction in the department, curate collections, manage social media, and manage collections. I instruct approximately 65 classes a year in Special Collections. Most of the classes come from history, English, journalism, art, and library science. I do everything from show and tells of the resources, overviews of online tools, and for introductory classes, I introduce students to collections using the speed dating technique. A couple times a year, I also serve as a guest speaker for library science classes. As faculty, we are evaluated on service and research in addition to librarianship. I am heavily involved in campus governance organizations as well as library organizations locally, in the state, and nationally. Since I’m a faculty member, I am also required to publish and serve on committees in the library, university, and profession. As faculty, we
select our governance option, which over the past 10 years has been a 3-person elected body. These elected faculty members perform all evaluations with minimal input from supervisors. This has created a more collegial and more honest environment.

Wallace. I work at a state school with an FTE of 16,000 students. We have nine faculty-status librarians at my library. I lead a team of instruction-focused library faculty to plan and formalize the establishment of credit-bearing information literacy courses through the library, which are slated to begin fall 2020 as a General Elective credit. I also lead an instruction-related professional development program for library faculty, with sessions on student engagement, peer observation, and balancing faculty and student needs within one-shots. I serve as library liaison for Political Science and Criminal Justice, Sociology, Geography, and as the library’s contact for government information publications. Additional liaison assignments include Undergraduate Education, and, in 2017, the Department of English, including responsibilities for teaching ENG 130, which serves as a formal introduction to library services and tools for a high volume of undergraduate students.

Cora. I work at a small liberal arts college with 2,400 FTE. We have two campus libraries, 600K volumes print collectively, and 10 librarians. My role as arts librarian is split between providing research and instruction services in my liaison areas and in managing visual resources both in and out of the library on campus. I spend about 60.0% of my time doing research appointments, liaison duties, and instruction. Usually my teaching is centered around one- or two-shot sessions that are assignment-specific. For a few classes, usually first year seminars, I don’t always teach to an assignment, depending on what the instructor has asked for. My teaching is influenced heavily by feminist and
critical pedagogy. I do not serve on campus committees as it’s notoriously difficult to get a staff committee position, as they’re so limited, but I do serve on a teaching special interest group through a professional organization.

**Overview of Themes**

Four major themes emerged from the data. The themes and subthemes are outlined in Table 18.

Theme 1, Institutional Culture’s Impact on Librarian-Disciplinary Faculty Relationships, is about the institutional structures that influence how academic librarians approach their relationships with disciplinary faculty. While some institutional structures can be helpful for librarians, they can also work as a barrier to developing more collaborative relationships with disciplinary faculty. Theme 2, Emotional Stressors Impacting Librarians’ Work, is about internal concerns faced by academic librarians. These professional concerns influence how academic librarians work with disciplinary faculty. Theme 3, Librarians’ Strategies for Negotiating Relationships with Disciplinary Faculty, discusses practical strategies used by academic librarians in negotiating these relationships, how academic librarians play the organizational game of their institutions, and the role of deference behavior in these relationships. The fourth theme, Underlying Causes of Academic Librarian Deference Behavior, is about large-scale problems in the library profession; these include concerns about inefficient training and ineffectual library leadership. Themes 1 and 2 relate to Research Question 1b, Theme 3 relates to Research Question 1c, and Theme 4 relates to Research Question 1d. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss the themes in relation to each research question.
Table 18

Themes and Subthemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1</td>
<td>Institutional Culture’s Impact on Librarian-Disciplinary Faculty Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campus Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2</td>
<td>Emotional Stressors Impacting Librarians’ Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Tensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Librarian Concern about Faculty Perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear of Losing Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to Justify Positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3</td>
<td>Librarians’ Strategies for Negotiating Relationships with Disciplinary Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practical Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing the Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role of Deference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 4</td>
<td>Underlying Causes of Academic Librarian Deference Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library Leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 1b

Q1b What Factors Influence Librarian-Disciplinary Faculty Relationships?

Institutional culture and emotional stressors emerged as the two factors influencing librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. Institutional culture represents
campus structures such as resource allocation, librarian participation in academic activities, and institutional choices about librarian faculty status. These cultural factors influence how academic librarians interact with their campus and their peers. Emotional stressors for academic librarians include professional tensions, librarians’ concern about disciplinary faculty perceptions of their work, librarians’ fear of losing business, and a need for librarians to justify their positions. These emotional stressors influence how academic librarians build and maintain relationships with disciplinary faculty. These themes are important to the study of academic librarian deference behavior because both the structures of higher education and the changes within the library profession impact how the behavior manifests.

**Institutional culture’s impact on librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships.**

Participants noted that the amount and type of institutional support and recognition for the library builds an institutional culture which is an important factor in librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. Institutional culture shapes the perception of librarians on campus, which impacts how empowered librarians are to do their work. Olivia summarized the concern about institutional culture when she stated:

> It’s the huge influence that institutional culture has on so much of this stuff. I think there are steps we can take to be more empowered in certain ways, and there are different things we can do, but I think that so much of this comes back to institutional culture, and what we can do, then, in response to that to push back despite whatever the institutional culture might be.

The areas where institutional culture is most impactful are resource allocation, campus participation, and institutional choices about librarian faculty status.
**Resources.** Institutional support was discussed monetarily, with participants indicating that as library budgets are continuously cut, the library is not seen as important on campus. As Becca stated:

> I think about that in terms of just the overall institutional thoughts around librarianship. And that’s always a place that--well, if you need to cut a little, you can cut from there because librarians will make it work. They’re such friendly, accommodating people.

Becca’s comment highlights the ease with which library budgets are cut in higher education as well as librarians’ perceptions of how institutional administration views librarians and librarians’ perceptions that the librarian stereotype of friendly and accommodating negatively influences campus decision making.

Space resources were also discussed as a concern. Some participants continue to lose teaching space in their library to other campus units, which these participants believe suggests to campus that they are not real teachers or that the teaching they do is so tangential to not warrant classroom space. A conversation with Becca went as follows:

Lyda: So, did the library own their own classroom spaces and then the institution put them into the larger campus scheduling system?

Becca: Basically, yeah. In some instances, they’ve actually given them away to specific units. Other units went to the provost and said we want that space. Or not even necessarily the provost; different entities on campus said we want that space. And then the campus said okay, sure. I don’t know that the librarians really need it. So, it sounds good. And then it was gone. And sometimes, we weren’t even notified. We’d go in and then it would be remodeled, and we’d be like, what’s happening? And they’re like, oh, well, this is gonna be ours now.

Here Becca discusses concern about losing teaching space but also concern about a perceived lack of respect of librarians at her institution with space being taken away without their knowledge. Lucy also discussed her library’s space issues stating:
We have lost a lot of the physical space in our library to offices and things like that. It’s one of the biggest struggles that we’re facing right now, and we have a computer lab within the library that we do use for library instruction, but it’s not ours exclusively, so anybody can reserve that space.

Lucy is dealing with losing teaching space and not having dedicated teaching space for library instruction. Cutting budgets and revoking space, especially in Becca’s environment where librarians were not even informed, suggests a campus culture that undervalues the academic librarian role in the educational mission of the institution.

**Campus participation.** The perception that librarians are undervalued is solidified when librarians are excluded from campus conversations where they could play a major role such as orientations or faculty development workshops. Sam discussed both situations on her campus stating that “when new faculty have their tour at the beginning of fall semester, we are rarely included in that very busy orientation program, and those are small things that the institution could do to help us build relationships.” Sam attended a faculty development presentation about fake news and noted that she was “shocked . . . that the library wasn’t part of the organizing team for this.” In terms of campus-wide participation, some of the librarians noted that they are not part of campus conversations about curriculum in courses where there is an information literacy component. As Lucy stated, “just the fact that we don’t know what half of the freshman seminar instructors are doing to address those topics is kind of concerning, and we feel like we don’t really have that much control over that.” Sam and Lucy’s descriptions of being left out of academic discussions and events are examples of how institutional culture may influence campus perceptions of librarians and be a barrier to relationship building.

Librarians are sometimes left out of major campus events. One of the most significant examples is from Blanche who noted that, while disciplinary faculty on her
campus are interested in partnering with librarians, the institutional culture is less
supportive and recently left library faculty out of New Faculty Orientation. Blanche
explained:

We had new faculty show up, and there was no library table. There was one for all
the other colleges, but not for us. And there was a luncheon for new faculty, and
they didn’t have anything for the librarians. And I think some of that is--I mean,
the dean needs to promote that a little more and be a little more active in
contacting the different groups about it. But yeah, we do have that pop up.

Blanche’s example shows a campus culture that ignores academic librarian membership
in the academy, and this culture sets the tone for librarians at her institution, both in how
they understand their place on campus and how other faculty view them.

Faculty status. Faculty status for librarians is an institutional choice, and that
choice has professional implications for the librarian. Participants in this study included
librarians with and without faculty status. Those with faculty status noted the benefits of
that status while those without faculty status discussed problems with not having status.
Fox’s short response to the question of faculty status reflects a general sentiment--“well,
we’ll get more respect from the teaching faculty when we do have faculty status.”

Benefits of faculty status. Some participants indicated that faculty status meant
they were seen as part of the academy. For Lucy, faculty status “facilitates these
relationships we’re talking about, like our input on assignments and things like that. I
think faculty status implies that we’re a partner, and we can take part in those same
processes that teaching faculty do.” Becca discussed the benefits of faculty status in terms
of visibility on campus committees. She remarked:
I think one of the biggest things is visibility. Librarians’ presence in other venues with faculty, so curriculum committees, part of the academic senate, participating in new faculty orientation as new faculty members to be oriented to the institution. I think that kind of level of visibility for us as colleagues is helping with sort of establishing that we are equals.

Jared discussed this as comraderies shared during the tenure and promotion process stating:

[Faculty status] does impact how I interact with [disciplinary faculty] because just like they’re putting together promotion and tenure binders, I’m doing that. I can say, ‘I need to do this, and can you observe me formally as I work with your students so I can get a written teaching evaluation out of it?’ And, that sometimes will sort of shift their thinking about me, and they’ll say, “oh you’re doing the same thing, you’re tenure track.”

Lucy, Becca, and Jared’s comments highlights the inner circle mentality that comes from faculty status and the access it provides for individual librarians. Both Wallace and E.J. noted that faculty status gave them more freedom in their work. For Wallace, faculty status allows him to do what he needs to do in the classroom and “to assert things in the classroom, as far as a curriculum.” For E.J., faculty status affords him “the opportunity to kind of push a little bit,” and he feels empowered to push back because he has earned tenure at his institution.

Issues with not having faculty status. A major issue with not having faculty status is being left out of campus conversations. As Cora stated, “it’s very hard to get involved on campus committees as a staff person. They’re mostly like faculty-run and faculty-populated. I’ve tried and have not yet made it onto a committee.” When asked if there were things happening on her campus that she just was not aware of, Rifke replied, “that can often be the case. I have not had a lot of luck getting close to curriculum committees and things of that sort. There are committees I’ll never have the opportunity to even witness, let alone join, on this campus because I’m staff.”
Cora also discussed not being respected in her teaching role because she does not have faculty status. When asked about librarians’ role in assignment design Cora stated:

I think it is something we could certainly do and help with on campus, and I think it’s needed here, but I can’t see it going very far here because we don’t have faculty status. I can just see us going to like a curriculum symposium or something and giving a presentation on . . . research assignment design and just being dismissed because you know, what do we know we’re just librarians.

Faculty status provides a level of visibility denied to staff, but Cora’s statement is powerful because she is equating faculty status with acceptance in the academy as peers; her perception is that her expertise is not valuable without status.

**Emotional stressors impacting librarians’ work.** Four emotional stressors that influence librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships were revealed in the study. These include (a) professional tensions, (b) librarian concern about faculty perceptions, (c) fear of losing business, and (d) need to justify positions. These emotional stressors reflect the internal concerns librarians must contend with while negotiating relationships with disciplinary faculty.

**Professional tensions.** The two professional tensions uncovered during the study are (a) the profession experiencing a shifting professional identity from service providers to more classroom-focused librarians and (b) the shift in focus on who librarians “serve” on campus.

**Shifting professional identity.** Participants discussed the tension in the shifting professional identity of academic librarians, which impacts relationships with disciplinary faculty. As Wallace reflected:

I think that we’re dealing with both these outdated ideas of what faculty think we do. And at the same time, the profession itself is undergoing this massive shift to being more like classroom forward. Whereas, before we could get away with being kind of that stereotypical librarian or that servile role that Rifke mentioned.
So, it’s two transitions that seem to be happening at once. We’re changing ourselves to become more academic and more equal in our measurements for how we succeed with our disciplinary faculty peers. But they’re still bringing their, well as you mentioned, Sam, their outdated modes of what librarians are all about. So, we’re all a bit lost.

Wallace’s description shows how daunting the changing profession is; there is a tension between librarians experiencing a changing profession but also between librarians and disciplinary faculty.

Sam and E.J. both noted that the library profession has changed drastically, and this shift has caused internal divisions within their libraries between librarians who want to stick to traditional views of librarian work and those who want to focus more on the role of librarians in student learning and take a more active role on campus. Sam stated that the drastic change in the profession has caused a schism in her library and the librarians “can’t figure ourselves out.” She shared that the library instruction coordinator in her library is “burned out from trying to convince the librarians that [information literacy] is important,” indicating the internal conflict between traditional views of librarianship and a shift to a more classroom-focused profession that Wallace mentioned.

Internal conflict can hinder librarians in moving forward campus initiatives around information literacy and asserting librarian expertise. E.J. explained:

To some extent, as librarians, we are fighting an uphill battle in this regard because this has been the past practice--this servant/assistant--and a lot of it was built on ‘I can show you where to search.’ But we’ve digitally come a long way from that, but internally, we’ve got a lot of work to do to be bold, and to confront these information literacy gaps, and this misuse of information literacy, and I think we have to. We must take ownership of that. I think that’s a need.

Sam also reflected on internal conflict, noting that it impacts the librarians’ role on campus. Sam stated that in her library:
We have major divisions as to how we see our philosophy of librarianship and what librarianship means. I think that is a very major issue. So, we’re just not able to talk to each other and figure it out. Because we have this internal kind of discord, it’s hard for us to project a united front on campus.

Becca shared a similar thought about her library:

I do think that sometimes there comes a tension in the way that we might approach initiatives or involvement in campus projects and things like that. So, for example, as a college, the library is recognized as a college in our institutional structure, we are expected in many ways to do assessments of student learning, similar to the ways that the academic colleges do. And I know many of my colleagues feel that like this requirement to do assessment is outside the scope of our work. It’s not really appropriate for librarians to do that. This is just an institutional requirement that’s a bureaucratic hoop that we have to jump through. And I get it because sometimes it is. But I think maybe the librarians that have more of a teacher orientation to themselves see the way that this is one of the things—that as participants in an educational institution, that we have to do.

E.J., Sam, and Becca are struggling themselves with the internal library tensions that result from not all librarians in an organization being ready for or willing to undergo a shift in professional philosophy.

Who do we serve? The other professional tension is about who librarians serve—do librarians serve the faculty or the students? Numerous participants took exception to the idea of serving faculty, instead indicating a need to view faculty as peers with the shared goal of student success. Here is a conversation between Eric and Jared, a conversation that depicts two different philosophies of librarian work:

Eric: There’s this continual tension of how do you interact with faculty? But, I don’t know. I guess if you look at it like a social class thing, I am always trying to find a way to help serve them and support them, and maybe there’s that tension there, but at the same time, it doesn’t feel like I’m cleaning their shoes, either. It’s this ongoing tension.

Jared: It’s interesting that you said—I sort of did a bit of a double take when you said that you’re trying to serve the faculty and support the faculty. I don’t see my job as that, so that’s just really interesting. I don’t see my job as necessarily serving the faculty. I
see my job as serving the students through support to the faculty, but the word “serve” just sounds strange to me—not necessarily bad, just different.

Like Jared, Cora does not see her role as serving faculty. She stated, “I’m not just here to serve the faculty. I’m here for my own purposes as a librarian to make sure students are getting the information literacy skills that they need.” Blanche had similar thoughts, stating “I wouldn’t say that we’re facilitators for disciplinary faculty. I would say that we are collaborators and that we work together on the educational process.” Wallace shared a similar sentiment, asserting:

If we just agree [to whatever the faculty want] then they know we’ve essentially agreed to be their on-call librarian for whatever they want, whenever they want it. And who wants to do that? Whereas, as conversation we’re engaged more with the curriculum with them. We’re not servile. Yeah we just get to be a peer.

Jared, Cora, Blanche, and Wallace are focused on being peers with faculty; these four librarians who exhibit low deference spoke strongly about their role as peers and collaborators with disciplinary faculty.

There was a conversation across focus groups about serving the student while supporting the faculty to do the same. Participants were asked to respond to the following quote: “Librarians must take equal, and if necessary, primary agency in the construction of the information literacy learning environment for students. Or else, risk being an automaton that serves the needs of faculty” (Meulemans & Carr, 2013, p. 88). It was during a discussion of this quote where the differences between participants exhibiting high and low deference were more evident. The most interesting part of this conversation was the willingness of participants to engage thoughtfully in this discussion and being open to shifting their thinking through conversations with their peers. Here is the conversation between me, E.J., Olivia, and Lucy:
E.J.: Olivia, I understand your trepidation with the word “cease” in that regard, “cease being at the service.” We’re not only serving—I have a problem somewhat with the word “service” in general, but if you say in terms of service, we’re not only serving faculty. We’re not at the faculty’s beck and call. There are a lot of other stakeholders to the library and the university than faculty. It’s not a “cease to serve or work with” or whatever, but maybe they aren’t held to this highest esteem as a faculty member. Especially, I think about that as a faculty member, viewing them more in a peer regard than this unapproachable being.

Olivia: That’s a really interesting point, just that--almost refocusing our service, if you will, on all of the other stakeholders that we serve, and I would argue that for many of us, that primary group is and should be students, and so, that’s really interesting to try intentionally to move away from faculty on this pedestal and bending over backwards, or being at their beck and call, and refocusing what we’re doing on students specifically. That’s an interesting concept.

E.J.: I agree with that 100 percent. If you’ve got a classroom of 20 students that are confused by the assignment, who’s at fault there? 20 to 1—you’ve gotta start looking at that one, even if they’re in this cloud of expertise within their discipline. Whatever, throw that out. I agree with you in terms of the student focus, and to get to that focus, play more on a peer level in these discussions.

Lyda: I’ll quote E.J. from the last focus group. He said, “The faculty are a player in a much larger game.” If we’re only thinking about what they want and going along with it and deferring to them without asserting what we know may help students, then no one’s gonna win.

Lucy: What you said right there at the end is kind of what I homed in on when you guys were talking, is the part where it says “construction of the learning environment for students.” That’s our campus motto--it’s on the back of all our business cards. It says, “The student is the most important person at [this university].” That is our campus motto, and I think above all else, that’s why we’re here. That’s why this whole campus exists.

In this conversation, Olivia and Lucy are not so much changing their opinion because of the conversation but experiencing a refocus of purpose from faculty to students; this is a shift in mindset about librarians’ work.
A similar conversation took place between me, Wallace, and Sam:

Sam: I disagree [with the quote] just because I’ve been really thinking about this a lot and reading the articles that you shared, Lyda. And I think it has to start with a conversation and a negotiation. So, this statement is just too strong for me. So, I may agree with certain parts of it, but as it is, I can’t agree with it the way it is.

Lyda: Is it too strong because of your particular environment or is it too strong in general?

Sam: No, I think in general, I guess I shy away from these must do this or this is the only way that it’s possible.

Wallace: Well, I didn’t want to be an automaton. I don’t want to get in a situation where I’m on-call because the boundaries get eroded very, very quickly and I guess I’m focused more on the second half of this question. I’m not there to be a research assistant for another faculty member which is an ask that you get frequently if you are seen as there for them continually and only there for them. That’s a really uncomfortable relationship. For so many reasons really; the tenure and power and all that kind of stuff.

But really, gosh, it just goes back to feeling comfortable about asserting that this is what we know, this is what we spend our time doing. There’s a reason we want to be involved in the student’s classes. And that’s to help students succeed with concepts that we have way more traffic in than they do and that our disciplinary faculty colleagues do. So, why wouldn’t we be equal?

Lyda: For me the words that I attach onto are agency, so it’s not really talking about control. I mean, agency to me is I have an expertise and I’m going to assert it and I’m going to have agency in this. And the other piece of it is the learning environment for students. That my goal is students and so if the student is our product, as someone once told me, and if I’m not serving the product, then I’m not serving the mission of the institution. So, for me, I think I can ignore the harshness of the cease/must language when I look at those particular words, because I think there’s some empowerment in them.

Sam: Yeah, it does change the way I see it then. Completely. I’m going to be happy to read this because it’s much more recent than the other ones, and so this is good. Having kind of talked this through, then if I had the chance, I’d probably change my answer.
Lyda: Okay. Do you want to--A little bit of reflection about why?

Sam: I’m putting some distance between the harsh language and I totally agree. I wasn’t seeing the word agency. And I do agree that student success and information literacy of students is the name of the game.

In this conversation, too, there is a shift of focus, moving from serving faculty to serving students. The shifting profession towards more classroom-focused teacher-oriented work in academic libraries is also shifting the idea of service. The librarians who have shifted their mentality from serving faculty to serving students are more empowered in how they negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty.

**Librarian concerns about faculty perceptions.** Participants discussed their experiences with disciplinary faculty’s perceptions of them and their work. There was a perception among the participants that disciplinary faculty have an outdated idea of library work, which means librarians are constantly having to justify their value to campus and defend or explain their status.

**Disciplinary faculty have an outdated understanding of librarian work.** Some participants perceive disciplinary faculty as having an outdated understanding of the work of librarians, which makes collaboration challenging. As Wallace reflected “the interactions with disciplinary faculty, I think they start off kind of tentative because usually they’re coming from a position where they have kind of an outdated idea of what librarians do.” Sam noted that “what sometimes faculty overlook is the fact that we have our specialty too, even though we may not have a Ph.D. in that, and they forget what we’re trained to do.” Olivia also reflected on faculty perceptions, stating, “I think that a lot of faculty think that we’re just clicking buttons. You click here, you click here, and then it’s all correct.” These comments about disciplinary faculty perceptions of their
work indicates that an outdated or limited understanding of librarians’ work can lead to a lack of respect for the librarian teacher role and librarian expertise. A recent interaction between Lucy and a faculty peer reflects this concern and illustrates how an outdated view of librarians’ work can hinder a librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship:

Just this week I met with an instructor for one of these freshman seminar classes about what she wanted for the instruction that I actually did for her class this morning, and she basically sat me down and taught me all of the basics of information literacy. It felt like there wasn’t any trust there, which was frustrating.

*Librarians must demonstrate expertise.* Several participants shared the perception that they must show their worth to disciplinary faculty before they are given respect from disciplinary faculty instead of their expertise being assumed. As Eric stated, “if they see us teaching and they see that we can teach, not just ‘here’s the database,’ but actually doing teaching techniques, I notice that that’s where the respect kicks in from my experience.” Olivia also discussed the need to demonstrate expertise and how that need can be a catch-22 for librarians who must show expertise in the classroom but need to get into the classroom in order to show that expertise. Olivia stated:

I think showing them how we can engage with students and showing them what we do and how useful that can be for the students . . . basically just showing rather than telling I think is more effective, but of course that requires them to let us into their classroom to begin with.

Wallace and Jared expressed similar beliefs that just telling disciplinary faculty about our expertise does not work, that librarians must demonstrate competence. These comments indicate that librarians believe they must perform and impress disciplinary faculty to gain respect from them.

*Disciplinary faculty are unaware of librarians’ faculty status.* Participants with faculty status noted that disciplinary faculty are usually unaware of their status. While a
lack of faculty awareness did not bother most of them, there is a concern that the constant need to justify the status and remind people of it diminishes that status. Becca explained:

I almost feel like, as librarians, we almost spend a lot of time justifying our status as faculty. I’m not quite sure how to describe it, but it almost feels like because we have to spend so much time doing that justification work, it almost diminishes our role as faculty. Because it’s not like when somebody from the department of child development walks into a room--everybody knows that they’re faculty. But then it’s sort of like, oh, you’re here. Let me justify to you why I’m here and then I can proceed with my work as a faculty member. And so sometimes that feels like it almost makes us--I think a term I found in an article I was reading recently was minor faculty or under faculty. It was like you’re faculty, but you’re sort of like a junior--not junior faculty in the sense of status or rank, but just sort of like, oh, you’re like a baby faculty member or something like that.

How the institution regards academic librarians influences faculty perceptions of librarians and their work and impacts how empowered academic librarians are to negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty. While faculty status provides access for academic librarians into campus decision making, the need to justify that status or constantly remind peers of that status can cause a power imbalance in the librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship.

**Fear of losing business.** Some participants discussed a fear of saying no or a fear of pushing back on what disciplinary faculty ask them to do in the classroom because they do not want to negatively impact their relationships and risk “losing business” in the form of library instruction sessions. This fear is symptomatic of librarians at many institutions needing to rely on disciplinary faculty for their work; if librarians do not schedule library instruction sessions then they will not be considered valuable to the campus. Discussions of librarians’ fear is another time where the differences between participants exhibiting high and low deference was evident. Here is a conversation between me, Eric, and Rifke:
Eric: I never say no. It might not be something I want to do or how I want to do it, but I’ll always find a way to say ‘yes, we can do something like this for you.’

Lyda: What does that come from? Why?

Eric: Oh. Part of it is the service mindset. Part of it might be more of--might be fear driven, of we need to find a niche wherever we can find a niche. And so--that might be a little bit of it too--yeah I think there may be a little bit of fear with it.

Rifke: I think one thing going on here that perhaps we all don’t want to touch on is the element precarity. In that, at least in my situation, I’m always aware that at any moment a faculty member could--may decide, “Hey, I can teach this stuff too,” and I’ll be shut out of the instructional session.

Later in the focus group discussion Eric reflected on his relationships with disciplinary faculty stating:

When I see some of these quotes, I’m like, ‘Well, of course, because I have to--I don’t know as much as the faculty member. I need to defer in a way.’ And in the times that I do have as much knowledge, there’s still that class structure. It’s like, well, of course I have to cater to the teaching faculty because they’re the ones who are going to advocate for me and they’re the ones who will invite me back into the classroom or not invite me back.

This conversation highlights how crucial the librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship is for many librarians and connects library instruction sessions to librarian value--if faculty decide they can teach the concepts, then librarians cease to be important. Additionally, through Eric’s reflection, we see how fear may lead to deference behavior.

A similar conversation took place between me, Sam, Lucy, and Fox when discussing pushing back and saying no to disciplinary faculty when it comes to information literacy instruction:
Sam: I’m aware of this, and this is something that I’m actively working on as a personal objective, is to improve my ability to say no and not think that I’m offending somebody. So, I’m working hard to take more ownership of that.

Lyda: I think that when this is the way that we go into our relationship, we have a problem getting out of the cyclical nature of that.

Sam: Because you do risk not seeing that faculty member again.

Lucy: Right, and for me, being on such a small campus, word travels fast, and if I offend one person, they’re not the only one who’s gonna hear about it, and I wouldn’t wanna risk losing even sections beyond that.

Fox: I wonder if maybe I’m acting like that librarian who’s looking at the quantity of instruction sessions they’ve done, but if we’re trying to improve our relationship with faculty and we’re not letting them call the shots, then we’re gonna lose them, and for us to have contact with those students, period, is better than not having any contact with them at all.

In Writing Prompt 2, Eric reflected on his fear of saying no:

The biggest piece that stood out to me in the focus group was that I and the other participants were driven in part by fear (if we don’t collaborate then we will lose our relevance and our jobs) but that the work cultures that we worked in were entirely different. The thing is, I didn’t really view myself or my work as such until it was called out. Now, a lot of collaboration I do with faculty I do because it is fun and rewarding. BUT I wouldn’t dare say no to it either because of the fear part.

Lucy, Sam, Fox, and Eric exhibit high deference. These conversations illustrate that it is not years in profession that is the only indicator of deference behavior—Sam and Eric have been academic librarians for 10 years and Fox for 22 years, but they still discuss a fear of losing business and deferring to disciplinary faculty because of that fear.

Regardless of years of experience, these librarians cede power of the information literacy learning environment instead of risking offending disciplinary faculty and losing their
relationships, which they believe will result in losing the ability to teach students and perhaps their jobs.

**Need to justify position.** Participants discussed the constant need to justify their existence and show their value to campus. As Becca stated, “I do get a sense that librarians and the library are in a place of constantly needing to sort of justify or provide evidence for the value that they bring to the university.” Olivia shared the same sentiment, stating, “we’re constantly having to justify our existence in all of these kinds of things, not only on an individual level or a departmental level, but as a library as a whole.” The constant need to justify librarians’ existence makes librarians’ jobs tenuous. Olivia and Lucy discussed this:

**Olivia:** I think everybody in every situation has to show their value these days and justify their existence, but I think that that phrase in and of itself highlights that our position as librarians, our position as a library as a whole is tenuous to a certain extent.

**Lucy:** The fact that we even have to say, “Yeah, it’s really important that we demonstrate our value” does speak to that. I haven’t thought about it that way, but you’re absolutely right.

A concern about the constant need to show value and justify existence is how much energy it takes, which can lead to burnout and result in deference behavior. Becca explained:

At a certain point, burnout is a real thing. Sometimes it does feel almost like, oh gosh, that conversation again. Let me do the work of reestabishing this relationship, and then justifying my existence, and then okay. And you do get tired, I think, and I see that in some of my colleagues, especially folks that have been working in the institution for a while. They’re kinda like, all right, yeah, I tried that. And I never really could make headway, so I just kinda gave up.

The need to show value is not necessarily coming from individual institutions. The conversation between Lucy and Olivia is pointing to a profession-wide conversation
about the value of academic libraries and a push by the profession for library value studies (Oakleaf, 2010). The professional push to show value may be causing emotional stress for academic librarians. Becca’s experience is more institution-specific and speaks to how institutional culture can have a profound impact on librarians’ work.

**Research Question 1c**

Q1c  How do Academic Librarians Negotiate their Relationships with Disciplinary Faculty?

Academic librarians negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty through practical strategies as well as by employing what Cunningham (2012) called a play-framework. In each situation librarians use both active and passive strategies. The strategies used by academic librarians to negotiate these relationships are important to the study of academic librarian deference behavior as the data suggest that those exhibiting high deference will employ more passive than active strategies. Additionally, deference may be used as a play strategy by academic librarians.

**Practical strategies.** Participants discussed passive and active practical strategies that they use to build relationships with disciplinary faculty. For some participants, like Rifke, these strategies are used to sell a product that “the faculty are somewhat wary of buying into, that includes giving up their time, their space, and their students.”

**Passive practical strategies.** Passive strategies for negotiating with faculty and building relationships are reflective of a more hands-off approach where the disciplinary faculty are kept at arms-length. Olivia, Fox, Lucy, Sam, and Becca discussed sending emails to disciplinary faculty to both introduce themselves and discuss library services and information literacy instruction. As Becca stated:
I buy them Starbucks gift cards and I send them notes, and I’m like, here I am, hi. You know, trying to be just here’s this warm and friendly person who’s willing to say hello and put myself out there so that you know that you have somebody on campus that you can work with that’s beyond your department. And try and then turn that into a relationship.

Sam shared a similar strategy:

I know the beginning of each semester, I send that email and I say, ‘send me your syllabus. I’d love to know what you’re teaching. If you have a big research project that your students are going to be researching, let me know.’

Lucy expressed frustration with disciplinary faculty when passive strategies did not work.

She reflected:

So, we thought that we were kind of keeping up with outreach, but it turns out that the faculty perception of that wasn’t what we expected it to be because a lot of them expressed that, ‘oh, I didn’t know that I had a say in collections, things like that.’ We’re over here thinking, ‘well, we send you an email every semester, and we remind you, and there’s that suggest a purchase button right on our homepage. What more do you want?’

This frustration with disciplinary faculty suggests that the disciplinary faculty on Lucy’s campus want more interaction with their librarians but neither group knows how to make that interaction happen.

Another passive strategy, which Lucy mentioned in the previous comment, is using the library website as a marketing tool. Wallace also employs this strategy at his library:

So, the best strategy for building relationships I found has been to be transparent and competent, and kind of express these things as directly as possible with the faculty who are curious or skeptical about librarians’ abilities, or their unfamiliarity with librarian competencies or roles. So, that means a very extensive website that details what our goals are, what our outcomes are, what we can do with the curriculum.

Wallace’s comment also reflects the need for librarians to prove their competence, discussed earlier as an emotional stressor. These passive strategies, while they can be
effective, put the responsibility for relationship building onto the disciplinary faculty.

Disciplinary faculty must do the outreach and follow-up when passive strategies are employed.

Active practical strategies. For those participants who used more active strategies, negotiating with disciplinary faculty is about visibility on campus. Being visible begins with building a collegial, friendly relationship before working on the librarian-disciplinary faculty working relationship. Active strategies include in-person communication more than electronic. As Eric stated:

It’s not so much the emails or the electronic pieces that build the relationships but it’s more of the things that we can do in person that work for building relationships. Of course, that’s trying to get into faculty meetings. I attend pretty much anything faculty meeting-related I can. If there’s a faculty workshop-- anything that they’ll let a librarian in. I’ll go to those sorts of meetings and I’ll just sit, make new friends that way. I try to do those friendship building things before I do things that involve the, ‘hey the library can do this for you,’ almost those sales pitch things--which of course we still do. But I feel like you have to do everything else first before you can really be effective with the sales pitch.

Cora also expressed success with actively building relationships with disciplinary faculty before the “sales pitch.” She stated, “so talking, not getting too personal, but talking a little bit personally. Just asking how they’re doing as opposed to just getting right down to business.” Like Eric and Cora, Blanche discussed building more personal relationships noting, “sometimes I go to faculty meetings and stuff like that, but a lot of times I hang out with people. I go out for drinks with them, or I go to faculty parties and just talk to them about resources.”

Eric’s discussion of campus visibility and attending campus events was shared by Lucy and Jared. Lucy noted that “more than anything, just trying to be visible on campus, making sure people know who you are, serving on committees, things like that.” Jared
shared a similar belief that being visible and engaging in conversation with disciplinary faculty more informally can lead to collaborations. He shared:

So, the story I can give with this is we had our freshmen read *Orange is the New Black*, the novel, one year. And I was invited to meet the author at a dinner, and one of the criminal justice faculty were there. And we started talking about library stuff, and then citing in APA, and she mentioned that her students were rubbish at it. And I said, “You know, I could work with your students and help, and maybe fix some things.” And then that started, we decided to schedule a session, and then she became one of my stronger collaborators.

Active strategies that include face-to-face relationship building instead of passive strategies seem more empowering for librarians and put them in control of these relationships.

**Play-framework.** Play refers to approaching work from a Play-Framework (Cunningham, 2012). Cunningham argued that academic librarians who approach their jobs from a Play-Framework are more satisfied in their work, and those who choose not to play experience burnout and do not enjoy their work. Using a play framework to approach relationships with faculty was discussed by numerous participants, and library instruction was described by multiple participants as a “game.” Becca’s comment about library instruction being a “long game” explains the work teaching focused academic librarians do to play the game of their organizations:

**Becca:** I guess just the freedom to be able to manage that classroom in the way that I want is really challenging. So, there’s the time constraint, but then there’s also just the ability to just let the learning outcomes be aligned with the way that I think that they should be aligned to further the learning experience.

**Lyda:** So, how do you deal with a faculty member who gets upset with how you’ve run the class? I’m wondering, where faculty aren’t always on board with that, how do you navigate that relationship with them?
Becca: I was just talking about this yesterday with a colleague. And they were saying that library instruction really is such a long game. Because maybe we meet [the faculty] and then we’re kinda like okay, all right, so here I am. I’m gonna do this APA instruction. And then next semester, it’s like, you know, I noticed after the APA instruction, I had a lot of students that came to my office to talk about this, so maybe we could also include this. And kinda doing a little bit of almost like negotiation of what the next session is gonna look like. So, once I get to know a faculty member a little bit better, if I kinda know their educational or their disciplinary background, I might make suggestions about this is what I see a lot of students within this area have challenges with or yeah, I see that we could maybe benefit from some APA instruction. And while we’re talking about APA instruction, maybe I could also add this other module in about evaluating sources, which will help because I know that you’ve said before that students are using too many websites and not enough scholarly sources. So, I try and do the work of connecting it to their goals so that then they’ll give me the space to do my own teaching design as well.

Here Becca is explaining the “long game” -- that negotiating relationships with disciplinary faculty can take multiple semesters before the librarian feels control over the classroom environment. This is an example of playing the game and staying in the game long enough to see results. Play included both passive and active strategies that librarians use to assert their expertise on campus and shape the information literacy curriculum.

**Passive play strategies.** As discussed earlier, one of Wallace’s practical passive strategies was to assert expertise in information literacy through the library website. A passive play strategy that participants discussed was use of their online library instruction request form; it is through the online request form that disciplinary faculty schedule library instruction and indicate their needs to the librarian. Lucy, Jared, Blanche, and Wallace discussed using the online instruction form to assert expertise and the librarian teacher role. For Wallace and Lucy, the form is used to present information literacy learning outcomes to disciplinary faculty. For Lucy, the form is a strategy to “gear them
in the right direction--‘these are the things we think you should want us to teach’.

Wallace shared a similar use, stating that the form “lets us . . . assert what we’re comfortable teaching and allows us to kinda steer the conversation . . . those things are defined by our outcomes and what we think information literate students are.”

Steering the conversation and guiding disciplinary faculty to make certain decisions are examples of these librarians finding ways to play the game of their organization in order to move forward their own goals for information literacy and student learning.

Active play strategies. Active play strategies discussed by participants included shaping the message for disciplinary faculty so that the goals of the librarian are seen as in the best interest of disciplinary faculty. For some participants there was a finesse needed to negotiate with disciplinary faculty. Blanche’s response to E.J.’s comment about librarians shouting about their information expertise was:

I don’t know if that’s the route that disciplinary faculty are going to grab onto. So much of it is hitting from angles of what’s gonna help them, what’s gonna make them better or their classes better, or their students--you know. So, I think there are so many other ways, at least I go around, to get people in, And then I kinda sneak all the information in later once I’ve got them.

Wallace shared a similar play tactic stating:

Anytime you have a conversation with anybody on campus and you angle it about student success, you’ll get so much more buy-in and so much enthusiasm from your faculty peers. And that’s the best way, always, it seems, to approach these conversations.

Similarly, Jared shared an example of shaping the message for a disciplinary faculty member:

It’s something that the faculty hadn’t thought about because they know how to evaluate sources, and I said ‘if you have the students just submit a quick reference list to you as a check--it doesn’t have to be for anything more than a participation
credit in your class—you will be much happier with the assignments your students turn in at the end.’ And then, every time I do it, I get an email from the faculty that says, ‘you were so right, I’m glad I did it this way.’

Here Jared shaped the information literacy learning environment for students by introducing scaffolding to a research assignment but couched this in the benefit for the faculty member. Blanche, William, and Jared are employing a play-framework through understanding the language these faculty will respond to.

**Pushing back.** Using a play-framework is also about pushing back against disciplinary faculty requests to assert expertise at a larger campus level and taking ownership of the classroom when working with disciplinary faculty. Pushing back as a play tactic was discussed by several participants. For some of the participants, pushing back is a librarian’s responsibility. As Wallace stated, “if you understand that [the faculty] have an outdated understanding of information literacy, your professional responsibility is to bring them up to date; our responsibility to the students that they’re influencing.” Pushing back can be challenging; as Becca noted, “it does kind of take a little bit of you know, bravery. That sounds like a silly word, but it kind of does, to be like ‘I’m gonna stand firm in my knowledge about this and the benefit that it’s gonna bring to the classroom.’” For others, pushing back came more easily. As E.J. professed, “I have difficulty understanding what the problem is with just kinda meeting stuff like this head-on. If you are approached by a faculty member with just a terrible idea for this instruction, and just saying, ‘this is a terrible idea’ what’s the worst that comes with that? You’ve got a bad relationship with one faculty member. So what?” It is important to note that Becca is a tenure-track assistant professor and E.J. is a library director, so they are at different places of power in their career, and E.J. certainly has more experience in higher
education and standing firm in his beliefs. Becca’s honesty about needing to be brave resonates with me as a woman in leadership as it certainly does take bravery to stand firm.

Pushing back was also done at the institutional level. To advocate for teaching space, Becca discussed encouraging her colleagues to “demonstrate their teacher role and why we need space to do the work of instruction and teaching.” Similarly, E.J. discussed changing position descriptions as a way to assert librarian expertise at the campus level.

**Deference behavior as a play strategy.** Librarians discussed using deference as a play strategy. Becca described play as “doing a little bit of a dance.” Words and phrases used by librarians when discussing how they negotiate with disciplinary faculty included “sneaky,” “manipulator,” “play dumb,” and “dirty trick,” indicating that some librarians deferred on the surface only. Eric described a situation where he used deference as a play strategy:

> I’ve done that two different times when I’ve been able to do that--help do some of the grunt work, so I’ve been able to build those relationships. And with that, getting in the door while keeping one faculty member, you’re able to then be in these meeting with other faculty members.

Wallace described another situation where he used deference as a play strategy:

> When I have conversations with faculty, a word that comes up over and over is offloading, and so I’ll convince them what they really want to do is offload this work that they don’t want to do . . . and let them focus more on their subject work. And that we’re happy to take on that role of doing this. And that argument by itself has always been a great way to get some buy-in that really doesn’t challenge their knowledge or their roles.

These tactics --“grunt work” and “offloading” -- are examples of librarians exhibiting deference in order to meet their own goals for student learning. There was also a discussion of using the service mindset as a gateway to asserting teaching expertise. The
goal is to embrace a teacher orientation, which was done through serving the disciplinary faculty.

_Not engaging in play._ Some participants expressed concerns about playing the game. For some, they want to play but they do not play because they do not know how or they do not know what being bold would look like. A conversation between E.J. and Olivia illustrates this concern for a newer librarian:

Olivia: I’d be very interested--and, I don’t know if there’s anybody that has come up in this study so far who might self-identify as being one of those forceful people or being on one of those forceful campuses in a forceful library. What is that like? How does it go? I just don’t even have a concept of that because every library I’ve been involved with is, to some degree, the opposite of forceful, and so, I’d just be really interested to hear from someone who is either self-identifying as forceful to whatever degree. I don’t even know--Do you immediately just get what you want? Do you get turned away? I just don’t even know what that would look like. Basically, what I’m getting at is--is any of our worry about being difficult or annoying--is any of it justified?

E.J.: I would self-identify as being fairly forceful. I will say this--your worry is unwarranted. It really is. I said this in the last focus group, and I wholeheartedly believe this and mean this. If somebody--because you’re forceful--just turns around and walks away, who cares? You didn’t wanna work with them anyway. And, if they’re that unresponsive to a little bit of constructive criticism toward an assignment, then they’re not gonna get tenured, they’re gonna be gone, and you’re still gonna be there. But, the external world is not--they’re actually pretty responsive to it. You said, “Do you get what you want?”, and I’m not bragging, but usually, yes. I think that to some extent, that’s because they almost want that. It relieves an area of stress and anxiety in other assignment creations or other departments, whatever. I think when we take that ownership, we move forward in a positive direction, I believe, for the students, too, because then the experts get to be the ones that relay stuff.

The conversation between Olivia and E.J. was an amazing part of the study because peers were seeking advice and giving honest answers about their work. For Olivia it is not
about a lack of desire to push forward a personal agenda but a fear or hesitation to do so simply because she has not been in a library where librarians pushed back.

Hesitancy to push back is certainly real, especially for newer librarians. Wallace expressed concern about pushing back for newer librarians; in response to E.J.’s comment about meeting stuff “head on,” Wallace replied:

I think that’d be such a challenging role to take if you’re a newer career librarian, or if you are new information literacy librarian, or if you’re the first person to teach a particular class. It’s so hard to challenge these figures who may be not even distant from an individual in age or experience, but just that perception of authority. And again, the typical masculine approach to authority versus that feminine approach, I think, comes into it as well with the librarians. It’s tough, because you don’t know this person who may not care, and you’re like, “Screw it, I don’t need to work with them.” But they could have a profound influence on other relationships with the university that you may not be cognizant of at that particular level professionally in your career.

Even for librarians further along in their career, pushing back can be challenging. Sam noted working to push back against disciplinary faculty’s outdated ideas of information literacy stating, “I’m trying to push myself beyond my comfort to be like, ‘well, it’s interesting that you say that, but when I see our students, I see this and this is kinda what the literature of librarianship says about that, so what do you think about that.’” Becca shared a similar desire, saying “personally I’m also trying to challenge myself to be better about asserting my expertise . . . establishing that I am an expert and that I have skills that I can bring to the conversation rather than always ceding.” Lucy reflected in the second writing prompt that she “feel[s] this hesitation when I want to try something new and creative in an instruction session . . . I’m afraid that faculty will think it’s silly and not worth the class time they gave up.”

**Fear of play.** For some participants there is a real fear about pushing back and employing a play-framework. As Olivia shared:
It just comes back to how can I as a librarian say, “no, you have to change your assignment. No, your assignment is bad for this reason” -- it just comes back to this deferential not wanting to offend, not wanting to be difficult because hey, they asked us to come into their classroom at all, and that’s the most we can ask for.

Fear of play can also be related to leadership decisions beyond the librarian’s control. For example, Rifke shared that her supervisor is more concerned with the number of library instruction sessions Rifke conducts rather than the quality of that instruction. So, for her, pushing back on what the faculty member wants in a class could mean risking her employment.

Research Question 1d

Q1d What are the underlying causes of academic librarian deference behavior?

The underlying causes determined by the participants for academic librarians ceding power and deferring to disciplinary faculty when it comes to the information literacy learning environment are issues with training for new academic librarians and issues with effective library leadership. Identifying these underlying causes is important to the study of academic librarian deference behavior as these are issues that the library profession can improve upon but are not something an individual librarian can control. Thus, librarians may be hindered in their work before they begin their first job and are then not given the tools or guidance they need for success in the academy.

Training. The teaching focused librarians in this study discussed concerns about training, both in their graduate education and in their onboarding as new academic librarians. A conversation between me, Jared, Fox, and Eric illustrated the concern about education and onboarding:
Jared: I’ve had people that I’ve passed off to colleagues, and they’ve written back, and they’re like, “I’ll only work with you. The other ones don’t understand how students learn. The students aren’t engaged.”

Lyda: But, this is a professional problem, then, right? That’s not good for any library, however big or small your program is. That’s not good for your campus. So, what’s going on?

Jared: I think it’s our library school curriculum. I went to [university name]. There was one class for school and academic librarians on effective teaching, and I actually taught that course after I graduated for a bit because it didn’t cover what needed to be covered. It didn’t talk about how to engage students. It didn’t talk about using an approved instructional design model. It basically talked about “Well, you look at the assignment, you pare down the skills they need, you lecture at them how to do the skills, and then they magically do the skills, and then they magically get better.” There’s very little training for how to have excellent classroom management skills, how to walk in and just speak to them—and, it all really goes back to confidence, because if you’re not confident in what you’re doing, they’re gonna catch on right away, and then it’s all downhill from there.

Fox: I think in our case, it’s the onboarding. I think onboarding--at the library I worked at before this one, 22 years ago, I didn’t get any onboarding in terms of how to do--and, I had zero classes in how to do instruction in library school at that time, and at my first job, there was no training. Another librarian just told me, “Just remember, you know more than they do.” That’s all I got for how to do library instruction. It’s a problem on our end, too.

There’s this one newer librarian who hasn’t had a lot of support because of our restructuring. She hasn’t had mentoring and everything. She’s not allowed to teach at one of our locations because she gave an instruction session that was so bad, the professor was like, “We don’t want her back.”

Eric: I think we all have these similar stories. I learned all my teaching techniques that first year on the job as a librarian, when I bombed in my first class. Thankfully, the faculty person pulled me aside and said, “You need to learn some stuff here,” so that’s when I frantically started learning educational pedagogy.
This conversation highlights problems these librarians see in both graduate education and onboarding as well as how these impact disciplinary faculty perceptions of librarians’ ability and expertise.

**Graduate education.** Participants discussed the MLS curriculum as lacking in the fundamental parts of their jobs which include teacher training and working with disciplinary faculty. Lucy shared a similar story as Eric about her graduate education, noting, “I refer to that first year as a librarian as my final year of grad school because it taught me way more.” In addition to teacher training noted by Eric and Jared above, participants were also concerned about not being trained to work with disciplinary faculty. Jared and Wallace discussed this issue:

**Jared**

I think a lot of this is missing from graduate programs and curricula. I don’t think there’s a lot of field work that happens to sort of apprentice people into the ways of working with faculty. They don’t talk to them in instruction class most of the time about how to write that introductory email, how to make sure that you stop by campus events to meet faculty. The curricula that I’ve seen, it’s, “Well, here’s how you plan a lesson. Here’s how you plan a unit. Now, teach it to just your peers in this class. Okay, you got it. Good, you’re done.” And that’s all you get before you go out into the field.

**Wallace:**

I like what you’re saying, Jared. I think through their classes or some kind of talk to folks about power and authority and about academia, and about the real nature of it. Because just as much as I think we could use work on being kind, I think the personalities that come to librarianship lean toward kind, and I feel like there should be equal attention given to librarians feeling comfortable coming from positions of strength and authority as faculty, or as professionals. That would be nice to see affirmed in the curriculum.

Additionally, there was a concern expressed by participants that faculty in MLS graduate programs are not qualified to teach in programs training practitioners. Blanche, E.J., and Jared discussed this:
Blanche: The thing I’ve found that makes it kinda problematic is that oftentimes, library science professors have never worked in libraries. And I think that’s weird as hell. I think that is weird. And so, it’s hard to address a lot of these issues, because maybe they were student workers a couple summers, you know? Which is a whole different ballgame than all of the sudden having an instruction project dumped on you or something. And I don’t know--I just think a lot of times, professors should have experience. So much of it is theory, but if you don’t know how to apply it, then it’s kind of going down the toilet.

Jared: Yeah, I definitely agree with you that the person who teaches, like, your management classes should have experience. And it might even make sense for that to be a group of adjuncts teaching it, who are currently employed. Yeah, I think that’s a big problem, is that we have a lot of Ph.D.’s that went straight from school to Ph.D. to teaching the theory on how to be a librarian, when in reality we’re an extremely practice-oriented field.

E.J.: Library instruction can evolve rapidly, so just as harmful as that person that has never worked in a library is also somebody that hasn’t worked in one since 1990. And that was the last time that they gave a library instruction session. Quite a bit has changed.

I think it’s something that has to be learned from peers and experience . . . this just needs to be something that individual institutions provide support for.” Unfortunately, like what Fox shared, participants noted a lack of onboarding in their libraries for new teaching focused librarians. Becca and I discussed this:

Becca: You mentioned how do you do the work of developing a librarian to assert that role and to assert that identity and maybe that’s [graduate education] where it starts.

Lyda: Yeah, interesting. Maybe. And I don’t know if you need a class on it, but I think it’s an onboarding process. How are you currently onboarding the new librarians in your department? How do they get orientated?
Becca: Well, they participate in the new faculty orientation, which at our institution is--no kidding, it’s almost three weeks long. Yeah, it is intense. I mean, it’s all day and they do ropes courses; it’s intensive. It’s really onboarding.

Within the library, it’s a great question. I mentioned we’re going through some administrative changes, so I think some pieces of onboarding have not been as fully fleshed out as ideally they will be, but we certainly don’t talk about it. We show them where the fridge and the microwave is. You know, like, oh, these would be some good people for you to make connections with for your objectives and your goals, but we don’t really talk about the dynamics [of librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships].

Lyda: Do you have a conversation with new librarians about relationship building and the process of that?

Becca: No, I don’t think so. We don’t, no. But maybe we should.

In reflecting on the final themes of the study through a member check, Becca connected training with the theme of play in reflecting on academic librarians’ ability to play or not as being connected to training. She wrote:

Something that’s coming up for me from the Overview of Themes is connecting two themes-- that of the play tactics, and of the preparation/training (either in the MLIS or through onboarding) librarians are provided to participate in these organization games. I wonder if disciplinary faculty, through their Ph.D. and relationship with Ph.D. advisor, are somewhat taught how to play these games prior to entering the institution as a full-fledged player, e.g., you might work on a grant but you’re not the PI, so you learn to navigate the politics of space, resources, etc., in a somewhat protected novice position. Librarians who enter the profession with masters-level training may not have had the benefit of this almost apprenticeship period, whereby you’re trained not only in doing the work of your discipline, but also, how to navigate the culture of higher education.

Becca’s reflection suggests that employing a play-framework is teachable through graduate coursework and better onboarding to the academy.

Library leadership. Another underlying cause of deference behavior expressed by participants was library leadership. Library leadership at the middle management and dean/director levels has an impact on how librarians view their role on campus and their
authority in the classroom. Wallace expressed his beliefs about the power of library leaders:

I think if we’re talking about the instructional librarians’ confidence in challenging traditional faculty, I think the way that they’re treated by the leadership, or how much empowerment they get from the library leadership could have such a profound impact on just that general sense of confidence or that general sense of how they fit into that role. Not of the library, but of the university as a whole. Like, are they told to stick to their lane by their leadership? That could mess up everything for an instruction person.

**Negative leadership.** Participants discussed poor leaders and how they can set the tone for deference behavior. For Rifke, her supervisor has zero interest in her work and has only observed her teaching once (on accident). Rifke remarked that her supervisor “has no interest in even knowing whether I do assessment . . . it’s literally just, how many people did you teach? How many different classes?” The way she is evaluated has caused Rifke to be “ruthlessly pragmatic” in her work. She explained:

I am ruthlessly pragmatic. You know, did I get in the class? Did I have my presence there, even if it was five minutes? Fine. Would I like to make some assignments better? Yes. But I have to look at where my efforts are best directed in terms of my success and my ability to be employed. And at the same time, my ability to find a job somewhere else. And the plain fact is to be employed here, I just need to pump out numbers, and not push anyone too far to make better situations for student learning.

Rifke is expressing a desire to help students which is trumped by her need to keep her job. Having to choose between these two indicates poor leadership and a lack of understanding by the supervisor about student learning assessment and how to assess a library instruction program.

**Positive leadership.** Participants discussed good leaders and how they feel more empowered to push back and assert their own expertise because of supportive leaders.
Lucy reflected on her experience with a good library leader throughout the research study, noting:

I’m lucky enough that our director is very supportive if we were to say ‘no, we’re not teaching this because it’s outdated.’ I know she would have our backs, and I think we’re very lucky. I think by seeing other librarians being empowered, it empowers you.

Cora expressed a similar experience with her supervisor, who is “vocal about working with faculty in a collaborative way and sometimes recognizing that librarians might have a little more subject expertise in librarianship than faculty necessarily think that they have on their own.” Rifke’s experience compared to Lucy and Cora’s shows the value of positive leadership in developing and supporting teaching-focused academic librarians.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented answers to the Phase One and Phase Two research questions. Of the 139 participants in Phase One, 35.3% (49) presented high deference, and 64.7% (90) presented low deference behavior. While there were more librarians in this sample with low deference, the results suggest the existence of deference behavior in teaching focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions. Librarians in their late twenties to mid-thirties presented the highest deference, and the highest deference scores are seen in newer librarians across age ranges. Additionally, more assistant professors present high deference behavior than any other traditional faculty rank. More librarians in this study presented low deference behavior than high regardless of status. When the answers to the deference scale questions were compared, the data showed that a higher percentage of participants answered yes to questions related to deference as play than any others. This pattern continues when comparing answers by deference range, faculty status, and years in profession.
Academic librarians negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty through passive and active strategies that also include employing a play-framework (Cunningham, 2012). More passive, hands-off strategies are used by those presenting high deference regardless of years in profession. Passive strategies by those with more career experience may be related to joining the profession before the profession began to shift; although, some late-career librarians, like Sam, note wanting to change their behavior.

Underlying these strategies are issues of institutional culture which influence disciplinary faculty perceptions of academic librarians and their work. Other structures, such as faculty status, also influence librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships due to a power imbalance either because librarians do not have faculty status or because they must constantly justify that status. Also underlying these strategies are the emotional stressors experienced by academic librarians. Due to the shifting nature of professional philosophies from a service orientation to a teacher orientation, there is internal tension among librarians as well as tension between librarians and disciplinary faculty. Librarians seem concerned about disciplinary faculty perceptions of them and their work, which leads to them approaching their relationships with disciplinary faculty from a position of fear.

The underlying causes of academic librarian deference behavior are poor training for academic librarians and limited preparation for academic library leaders. Academic librarian graduate education is not sufficiently preparing librarians to enter the academy, especially for those entering a faculty position. Additionally, academic librarian onboarding programs are non-existent or deficient in preparing teaching-focused
academic librarians for their roles. Leadership training for both middle managers and administrators in academic libraries is also lacking.

In the following chapter, I provide a discussion of the overarching mixed methods question. I connect the findings to the theoretical framework and present an updated framework, based on findings, from which to view librarian’s play framework (Cunningham, 2012). I also present research and practice implications for the field and conclude with a researcher reflection.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of my study was to explore academic librarian deference behavior in order to understand how the behavior manifests. I explored the patterns and perceptions of academic librarian deference behavior from the perspective of teaching-focused academic librarians in order to answer my overarching mixed methods research question: How does deference behavior manifest in the work of teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States?

While more librarians in Phase One presented low deference behavior than high (64.7% compared to 35.3%), the data showed the existence of deference behavior in teaching focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions. The data showed that deference behavior is more prevalent in librarians in their late twenties to mid-thirties. While the data suggests age may play a role in deference behavior, the highest deference scores are seen in new librarians regardless of age. Thus, time in profession may play a more important role in deference than age. This finding supports the discussion in Phase Two about poor graduate education and a lack of onboarding and professional development for new teaching-focused academic librarians. This finding also connects to the Phase Two findings where newer librarians spoke about the fear of losing business, or the concern about getting a bad reputation across campus if they pushed back against disciplinary faculty.
The data showed that more assistant professors in Phase One presented high deference behavior than other traditional faculty ranks. While this suggests that faculty status may play a role in deference behavior, it more supports the finding that years in profession is an important factor when looking at deference behavior. Assistant professors are early-career academic librarians who are most likely on a tenure-track. These academic librarians fear losing business or fear that they will not be able to build relationships with disciplinary faculty, which may hinder tenure and promotion. The connection to years in profession is also seen when looking at librarians’ perceptions of their relationship to disciplinary faculty. Those librarians in the profession for ten years or less both see themselves as subordinate to disciplinary faculty and see their role as serving the disciplinary faculty.

Regardless of years in profession, age, or faculty status, the quantitative findings indicated the strategic use of deference behavior by teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions. Overall, 58.0% of participants both cede power to ensure that they can teach students and defer to disciplinary faculty in order to open dialogue about student learning, indicating strategic use of the behavior.

The qualitative phase highlighted additional factors for how deference behavior manifests. Deference behavior is influenced by institutional culture and librarians’ emotional stressors. Either not having faculty status or having faculty status that others are not aware of on campus has led to librarians placing the Ph.D. on a pedestal, meaning that librarians see disciplinary faculty with the Ph.D. as more important to the educational mission of the institution than librarians. Becca discussed this:
I think it’s [deference] very real and it infiltrates almost everything we do. I mean, even when we have meetings. When the teaching and learning librarians in my unit sit down together and we talk about things, it’s like, well, will the faculty like that? But, I guarantee they’re [the disciplinary faculty] not sitting in their meetings being like, will the librarians be okay with that? So it does; it sort of informs everything we do.

Librarians with a more traditional view of librarianship may defer more to disciplinary faculty, which hinders librarians’ ability to assert expertise and run new initiatives that center information literacy in the library. If librarians view themselves as serving disciplinary faculty, deference is natural to that relationship. It is here where the qualitative findings suggest that being a late-career librarian does not assume low deference behavior; Fox has been in the profession for 22 years but still exhibits high deference behavior; this is most likely due to a traditional view of librarianship and service. If librarians see their role as serving students and supporting faculty in that work as peers and collaborators there may be less hesitancy to push back in the face of faculty with outdated understandings of information literacy.

Fear of losing business leads some librarians to never say no to disciplinary faculty, even when the librarian recognizes that their ideas for the curriculum will better serve students. Fear is perhaps the biggest driver of deference behavior in academic librarians, especially for those early in their career. A librarian’s years in profession may play a role because librarians are also concerned about pushing back or saying no when they are new to campus. However, Cora, a newer librarian, noted that she does not want to have a deferential relationship with disciplinary faculty even though that can be the “path of least resistance.”

The qualitative data suggest that deference behavior manifests within an institutional culture that does not support librarians and disciplinary faculty who do not
respect the librarians’ role as well as in institutions with poor library leadership. It is here too where the qualitative findings suggest that being a late-career librarian does not guarantee low deference behavior; Rifke has been in the profession for 28 years and exhibits high deference. Her deference manifests out of poor library leadership.

Deference also manifests from the emotional labor involved for librarians in the constant need to justify their existence and show their value. Constantly justifying their position can lead to burnout as librarians simply defer because they are tired of the constant need to show their value or justify their position. The need to show value is an expression of deference behavior at the professional level. The push from professional organizations for academic libraries to study their value stresses the importance of showing value (Oakleaf, 2010), but it is unclear that this mandate is coming from anywhere other than the profession itself. I argue that professional calls for value studies are detrimental and may be causing emotional stress for academic librarians. Olivia’s comment that the “phrase in and of itself highlights that our position as librarians, our position as a library as a whole is tenuous to a certain extent” reflected a concern about the constant need to show value.

The quantitative data identified deference as a play strategy, which is also supported by the qualitative findings. Deference behavior manifests as a play tactic at institutions where librarians feel empowered by their campus and their leadership. In an organization where librarians are encouraged to push back and forward their own teaching agenda, librarians may employ deference strategically to forward their own goals.
In the remainder of this chapter, I connect the findings discussed in Chapter IV to the theoretical framework, expanding on Cunningham’s (2012) Theory of Paradoxes and the Potential for Play. Next I discuss implications of the study for both practice and research. I then discuss the study’s limitations and conclude with a researcher reflection.

**Expanding the Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that informed my research on academic librarian deference behavior is the Grounded Theory of Paradoxes and the Potential for Play (Cunningham, 2012), in which Cunningham (2012) posited that successful community college academic librarians will use a play-framework to play the “organizational game” (p. 274) of their institutions in order to navigate the tensions, or paradoxes, of their work. These tensions are created by the marginalized role of academic librarians on campus as well as the hybrid nature of the librarian role as librarian and teacher since this hybrid role does not fit naturally into existing higher education structures (Cunningham, 2012). The tensions stem from the work librarians do to influence “decisions and actors outside of the library, beyond their zone of authority” (p. 228).

Cunningham’s (2012) Model of Nested Organizational Tensions, developed to illustrate her theory, showed five levels of librarians’ work, referred to as paradigms—epistemological, professional, curricular, programmatic, and classroom—and the tensions present within each paradigm (see Figure 1). I have updated the Model of Nested Organizational Tensions based on the findings of my study. The updated Model includes four paradigms—Philosophical, Professional, Curricular, and Classroom. Figure 6 illustrates the new model with the four paradigms and the tensions within each paradigm.
Figure 6. Updated model of nested organizational tensions (adapted from Cunningham, 2012).

**Philosophical Paradigm**

Cunningham (2012) discussed librarians’ struggles with a changing profession. A similar struggle appeared in my study; the changing profession is causing an internal tension between academic librarians who want to maintain a traditional view of librarianship and those who want to shift to a more classroom-focused practice. This tension is seen in the theme Emotional Stressors Impacting Librarians’ Work. This tension reveals a philosophical difference among academic librarians in the profession. This is important for academic librarians at 4-year institutions because it creates an internal tension between librarians in the same library organization. As Sam noted, this
means that her librarians cannot build a united front on campus. This internal discord obstructs paths for the library to play a more central role in the educational mission of the institution. This paradigm relates to deference behavior in that academic librarians with a more traditional view may be more inclined to cede power to disciplinary faculty in the context of information literacy.

**Professional Paradigm**

In Cunningham’s (2012) professional paradigm, librarians were struggling with professional changes outside of the institution. The tension in the professional paradigm was library versus librarian; the choice was to focus on the library as the gatekeeper of knowledge that is housed in the physical building or to shift focus to the role of librarians that is not tied to physical space. The professional tension I uncovered is over the question of who librarians serve--disciplinary faculty or students. Also seen in the theme Emotional Stressors Impacting Librarians’ Work, this tension is between librarians being servants of the disciplinary faculty or being peers with the disciplinary faculty. For those librarians who see their relationship as a peer, academic librarians serve the student and work with faculty to support improved student learning. Librarians who view their professional role as serving the disciplinary faculty may exhibit more deference behavior than those who view their role as peer. Participant conversation about this tension highlights the conflict between outdated professional beliefs about service and how these are changing for some academic librarians at 4-year institutions. This paradigm relates to deference in that academic librarians who see their role as serving students are more empowered in how they negotiate their relationships with disciplinary faculty.
Curricular Paradigm

The curricular paradigm is about the place of information literacy at the institution. In this paradigm, the tensions are integration versus authority. For Cunningham (2012), the decision was about librarians’ expertise and role on campus, asking if librarians should pursue curriculum that puts them in charge of information literacy or support curriculum that integrates information literacy into the work of all faculty. This tension was also evident in my study; however, the tension is between pushing for ownership of information literacy versus not pushing for ownership. Some participants want a major role in information literacy but not necessarily autonomy while others want autonomy of the information literacy curriculum but do not know how to get it or sustain it. Others push for ownership of the information literacy curriculum even if that curriculum is integrated. For example, E.J.’s library took ownership over the information literacy curriculum for English composition and first year experience courses, curriculum which is integrated into courses that his library does not control.

Cunningham (2012) discussed the tension of tradition vs. exploration through her Program paradigm; however, in my study these tensions are more at work in the curricular paradigm and are evident in the actions of participants to pursue library instruction outside of the traditional course-integrated model. For example, E.J. and Jared discussed grading student work related to the information literacy curriculum as part of a disciplinary faculty’s course as an example of a creative way to take ownership of the curriculum without having autonomy over all information literacy on campus. Other participants discussed a desire to develop credit courses to gain autonomy. As Olivia
noted “that’s the be-all, end-all. If you can get a for-credit class on campus, especially if it’s required--you’ve made it.”

The tension in the curricular paradigm is pushing or not pushing for ownership of some or all aspects of information literacy curriculum. The ability to push back also creates an additional tension in this paradigm. The wherewithal to push for ownership is dependent on institutional culture and the philosophical beliefs about service and professional roles held by the librarians at the institution. Where deference behavior manifests out of an unsupportive campus culture, there will be less push for ownership of information literacy by academic librarians. It can also be difficult to push for ownership when librarians feel they must demonstrate their expertise before they are taken seriously by disciplinary faculty, those from whom they are taking ownership.

**Classroom Paradigm**

The classroom paradigm is focused on the work of librarians as teachers and their role in the classroom. The tensions in this paradigm are service versus teaching. Librarians must choose between a teacher orientation, where they pursue their own goals for student learning, or a service orientation, where they focus on satisfying another faculty member’s goals for student learning. Cunningham’s (2012) tension between teaching and service was also evident through my research. What creates a significant tension for participants in my study is that some academic librarians are approaching their relationships with disciplinary faculty from a position of fear. When academic librarians fear losing business when they do not defer to the wants of the disciplinary faculty in the classroom, even considering their own expertise, this tension is exacerbated. For some academic librarians, this decision between service or teacher is not
easy to make. Rifke is dealing with poor library leadership; thus, her decision is not just between service or teacher but between employment or unemployment. Becca underscored the tension when she noted that pursuing a teacher orientation takes “bravery.”

**Play-Framework**

Cunningham (2012) theorized that librarians who approach the tensions in their work from a play-framework are “more likely to feel effective and continue advancing their goals” (p. 247). Cunningham stated that play is a strategy used by librarians at one or all levels of their work to influence their organization. The findings from my study indicate that play is a strategy used by those who exhibit low deference more than those who exhibit high deference, as those who exhibit low deference are more willing to push back in pursuit of their information literacy goals and enter what Cunningham called the “arena of conflict” (p. 274) in order to change campus rules. This study affirms Cunningham’s finding that play requires “a minimum of structural equality” (p. 273), namely faculty status, in order to have access to the arena of conflict.

Cunningham’s (2012) cycle of entering the arena of conflict (see Figure 2) illustrates “the decision-points at which it becomes possible for librarians to enter or avoid the organizational game in order to influence the context in which they are teaching and create circumstances in which their instruction can be most effective” (p. 274). My study revealed that the cycle can also be applied to the work of academic librarians at 4-year institutions. Additionally, librarians who exhibited high deference discussed avoiding the arena of conflict while those exhibiting low deference entered the arena of conflict. It is when academic librarians choose to enter the arena of conflict and play the
organizational game of their institution that we see deference used strategically as a play tactic.

**Deference as a play tactic.** Cunningham (2012) called for research that explored play tactics of academic librarians; my study suggests that deference may be a play tactic used by academic librarians at 4-year institutions to further their information literacy goals. Based on my findings I have updated the cycle of entering the arena of conflict (Cunningham, 2012), noting where deference may be used as a play strategy. I have also noted the use of passive play strategies in the cycle (see Figure 7).

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 7. Modified cycle of entering the arena of conflict to sustain effective library instruction.*
Deference may be used as a play tactic to help enter the arena and gain visibility. Eric described this as doing “grunt work” when collaborating with disciplinary faculty so that he gained a seat at the table and interacted with more people to expand his network and over time be more involved in different academic initiatives. For librarians in my study, the arena of conflict was the classroom or the curriculum. For those who enter the arena of conflict to push for ownership of curriculum, the play tactic used is “offloading.” Wallace, Jared, and Eric discussed offloading as a way to influence faculty into giving over the information literacy curriculum to the librarian in order to lessen the load of the disciplinary faculty. This tactic is successful in moving ownership of information literacy curriculum to the librarian. Additionally, participants discussed deference through a service mindset as a way to gain access; participants discussed first approaching relationships with a service mindset in order to gain the ideal teacher orientation.

**Passive play.** My study also revealed passive play tactics used by academic librarians that included showing expertise through the library website and directing conversations about student learning through an online library instruction request form. While this could be interpreted as a librarian choosing not to play or remaining outside of the arena of conflict, librarians are passively playing through these strategies. Passive play tactics were used by my participants regardless of faculty status or deference level. Figure 7 indicates where academic librarians may use passive play outside the arena of conflict.

**Implications**

My study has several implications for the practice of librarianship in higher education, including structures of library graduate education, credentials for library
school faculty, formalizing onboarding processes, and training for library leaders in higher education. Additionally, the study provides a foundation to open further study into academic librarian deference behavior and deference behavior in higher education more broadly.

**Implications for Practice**

**Library education.** Cunningham (2012) concluded that graduate school educators “need to better prepare librarians to become manager and educators” (p. 280). Discussions with my participants indicated that this may still be true. Library graduate education is not keeping up with the shifting profession, especially for academic librarians with a teaching focus. MLS programs should consider specific degree tracks for academic librarians where future practitioners can take courses on learning theory and pedagogy, building relationships with disciplinary faculty, communication, campus structures, role of librarians in faculty or staff environments, discussions of the role of faculty, and pursuing faculty positions. These conversations are currently missing from graduate education; consequently, librarians are entering academia lacking confidence in key parts of their work. Future practitioners need more field-based courses related to learning theory and pedagogy so that they can put their learning into practice. These librarians must have a theoretical foundation for how learning works so that they can both structure an effective learning environment and work with disciplinary faculty to develop successful learning experiences for students. Pedagogical techniques beyond writing learning outcomes and making lesson plans are essential; these may include problem-based learning in the information literacy context, active learning strategies, scaffolding processes for research projects, and team-based work. If it is not possible to add a new
course into a curriculum, MLS programs should consider partnering with local academic libraries to offer field experiences or internships so that students gain experience working directly in an information literacy program.

The discussions with participants about the qualifications of MLS faculty brings forward the question of credentials and the undervaluing of practitioners in library graduate education. The terminal degree for MLS programs is the doctorate; universities and MLS programs should reconsider the doctoral degree as the terminal degree for MLS faculty and align with faculty in art programs whose terminal degree is the MFA (or similar). This also makes sense given that the terminal degree for the profession is the MLS. Experienced practitioners with an MLS, especially those with evidence of effective management and leadership in academic libraries and library instruction programs, should be considered as qualified applicants for MLS faculty positions and not only adjunct positions. Practitioners are undervalued in library graduate education and should be playing a more active role in educating future practitioners. If MLS programs continue to require their faculty to obtain a Ph.D. to teach future practitioners, then field experiences are essential so that students get experience from those in daily practice.

**Training.** My study revealed a need for improvements in training for both new librarians and seasoned librarians entering middle management and administrative positions.

*New librarian onboarding.* A formalized onboarding program did not exist for the 12 academic librarians in the qualitative phase of my study. Given the lack of training in graduate programs specific to the work of academic librarians (such as communicating with disciplinary faculty and negotiating relationships with disciplinary faculty),
academic libraries must formalize onboarding processes that focus on communication, outreach, and pedagogy. For teaching-focused librarians, being able to effectively communicate with disciplinary faculty and outreach using more active strategies are crucial skills. The insufficient training around pedagogy and classroom management provided in graduate programs means that new teaching-focused academic librarians must be introduced to formal training on the job. Navigating academia can be institution specific so it is important for academic libraries to develop formal onboarding programs for their institutional context. A formal onboarding program in an academic library might include the following topics: campus structures and the place of the library in that structure, navigating these structures as an academic librarian, role of librarians at the institution including committee work and service, strategies for building effective relationships with disciplinary faculty, active outreach strategies for building relationships, classroom management, active learning strategies for information literacy and other effective pedagogical techniques for the information literacy classroom, and student learning assessment techniques for one-shot information literacy instruction.

Formal onboarding for teaching-focused academic librarians should also include classroom observations of teaching or team-teaching opportunities before a new librarian enters the classroom as the sole teacher. This is especially important for new teaching librarians who did not receive formal teaching training in their MLS program. Formal onboarding programs will result in more confident academic librarians.

Leadership training. My findings about leadership training align with Cunningham’s (2012) conclusion that librarians lack training in management. There is currently only one national academic library leadership training program offered through
Harvard University, which focuses on academic library leadership in a time of educational change and invites both library leaders and other campus administrators who work with libraries. With a price tag of $4,300, this program can be cost prohibitive (https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/program/leadership-institute-academic-librarians).

While smaller state library organizations offer leadership institutes, many times these are combined for both public and academic librarians. Additionally, library leadership programs are focused on being an academic library leader instead of being a leader in higher education; thus, academic library deans and directors are missing crucial leadership training to be successful as leaders in the academy. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA; http://www.ala.org/llama/) need to work on in-person, low-cost training for both middle managers and administrators. Training specifically for middle managers leading library instruction programs is lacking and is essential given the shifting profession. Additionally, new library deans and directors should seek training for leadership in higher education to gain the perspective of non-library administrators.

**Training tools.** Tensions exist in the work of academic librarians in 4-year institutions in similar ways to those in community colleges. It is possible that these tensions vary depending on the library context given institutional size differences, faculty status for librarians, and campus climate. The Model of Nested Organizational Tensions can be adapted and used by library leadership to determine professional development specific for their library context. For instance, middle managers could work through the Model and relate the tensions to their own campus and library. Understanding if and how
these tensions exist at their institutions will provide a foundation for building effective development for their librarians.

Additionally, the deference scale might be used as a tool in onboarding processes to help library leaders gain insight into perceptions of new librarians and can help determine effective professional development. A library manager could ask their department members to fill out the scale to determine their perceptions of their own roles or they could have a conversation with their department members about their perceptions using the scale questions as a foundation for their conversation. Responses to the scale questions can help managers determine where to focus professional development and onboarding for librarians.

**Implications for Research**

My study contributes to the literature on academic librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships by offering an exploration of relationship issues. Expanding on the work of Julien and Pecoskie (2009) and Downey (2016), this study provided a discussion of deference behavior and reports potential causes of this behavior, including higher education structures, emotional stressors, poor library leadership, and inadequate graduate education.

My work further develops Cunningham’s (2012) Grounded Theory of Paradoxes and the Potential for Play and indicates that Cunningham’s theory is applicable to teaching focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions. I have expanded the idea that deference is a strategic behavior used to establish and maintain relationships (Jourdan et al., 2017) by suggesting that deference can be used strategically to achieve organizational goals. The next avenue for research using the Model is to combine both the original and
my updated Model and explore all tensions in academic librarian work. I would like to see future research look specifically at model fit at both community college and 4-year academic libraries as I believe exploration of the Model can help us better understand the complicated work of academic librarians and how we navigate academic hierarchies.

My work contributes to the literature on mixed methods research design and the use of the participant selection variant for effective qualitative exploration. While calls for qualitative participation can be effective, the use of mixed methods was essential in gathering the right mix of participants for the qualitative phase. I hope that qualitative researchers will consider the use of mixed methods for participant selection and perhaps begin partnerships with quantitative researchers, thus, bridging the gap between quantitative and qualitative research and highlighting the importance of one to the other.

I successfully conducted this study using online focus groups, and my work contributes to the literature on using online formats, such as Zoom conference software, to conduct focus group research. The research on online focus groups is limited, and much discusses outdated modes of online focus groups such as discussion forums (Abrams et al., 2015; Brüggen & Willems, 2009; Murgado-Armenteros et al., 2012; Schneider et al., 2002). My research supports the use of online conferencing tools as an effective method to conduct focus groups, and I hope more researchers will consider online focus groups as a viable option, especially as it means expanding our participant reach.

Future Research

My study provides a foundation for additional explorations of academic librarian deference behavior. Some possible avenues for future research include:
• Update the deference scale using the qualitative findings and validate the instrument. Validating the instrument will allow for probability sampling techniques using a random sample. Continued quantitative study of deference behavior will add to the profession’s understanding of academic librarian deference behavior by discovering relationships between deference behavior and age, years in profession, status, gender, race, and institution type.

• Qualitative exploration of deference behavior and deference as a play tactic with specific populations such as early and late-career librarians and library leaders, including middle managers and deans/directors. More qualitative exploration will uncover how deference manifests in the work of academic librarians at all levels and can help to determine needed changes in library graduate education and training.

• A longitudinal study that follows students in their last semester of graduate school through their second year of an academic library position. A study exploring this transition from student to practitioner will expand our understanding of deference behavior by noting if there is a change in deference behavior over time and given graduate program and onboarding processes of their library. A study of the transition from student to practitioner will be useful in restructuring MLS education and developing effective onboarding for new academic librarians.

• Expanding the mixed methods research on deference behavior outside of academic libraries to minoritized occupation groups such as non-Ph.D. faculty, student affairs practitioners, campus assessment office personnel, and
faculty developers as well as minoritized faculty groups such as women and faculty of color, especially women faculty of color who experience minoritization due to their intersecting identities.

**Limitations**

The library profession is hindered by a lack of librarians of color. The small number of librarians of color in the profession impacts their visibility in library research, and this study suffered from having only one librarian of color participate in the qualitative phase and only three offer to participate. I attempted to include all librarians of color in Phase Two but was not able to due to a lack of follow-up by the potential participant or scheduling conflicts. Thus, discussions during this study were among the majority white voices in the profession. Part of the issue was the way that I solicited participants for the first set of focus groups. I used a Doodle poll, which was effective for tracking participant availability. However, for the first set of focus groups, I selected the strata and then provided members of each strata with a specific set of dates, which limited options for every participant. For the second set of focus groups I wanted mixed groups, so I sent all participants the same Doodle poll providing over 12 possible dates and times. Giving every participant a large number of scheduling options proved a better way to determine availability. I may have been able to include all possible librarians of color in the study had I provided all possible dates and then selected the dates for each strata during the first focus group.

The study participants were selected from a national sample and the 12 academic librarians represent different institution types from small liberal arts colleges to large state universities. However, there were no librarians in the study from institutions with
large library systems. For example, Duke University has over 30 librarians as well as multiple branch libraries. Perspectives from academic librarians working in that type of environment would add to the discussion of deference behavior as the behavior may manifest differently in a larger library environment. Another limitation of the study is the inclusion of a library dean among the participants. While this participant added to the discussion, I believe it would have been better to either have more participants in the study at this level of leadership or none.

**Researcher Reflection**

The findings of this study have taught me a lot about my profession and my colleagues. When I first noticed colleagues ceding power to disciplinary faculty on matters of information literacy, especially when it was clear my colleagues disagreed and were frustrated, it made me angry. As I continued to notice deference behavior, I tried to figure out how to change it and decided it was a behavior that needed to be explored. I always viewed deference as a bad thing, and early in this research considered it as something that needed to change. Finding Cunningham’s (2012) theory and considering how academic librarians might engage in playing the game of their institutions, I started questioning if deference might be a play tactic used by some librarians, which shifted my perspective a bit, although I still believed that deference behavior was more a negative than a positive even as I began data collection. At the conclusion of the study, I see deference as more nuanced. What I once saw as a flaw in my colleagues I now see as a flaw in the profession. My colleagues are not to blame for their behavior, as the profession is doing these librarians a disservice by not developing them into academic librarians who are prepared for the work of higher education or helping to train academic
library leaders, especially those running teaching-focused departments. I also see deference as a skill that might be cultivated and used as a strategy in the work of academic librarians—it may be teachable rather than something that needs to be stopped or fixed, as I originally thought.

I am moving from academic library management into a new role as director of a faculty development center. Armed with the knowledge that academic librarian deference behavior is influenced by campus climate, I am in a unique position to mold perceptions of academic librarians on my campus. As the person in charge of faculty development, I will use new faculty orientation as a time to include, not exclude, new library faculty. Academic librarians will have ample time at new faculty orientation to discuss library instruction and information literacy with new faculty. I will highlight academic librarian presenters in professional development workshops focused on research assignment design and information literacy in order to highlight the expertise that academic librarians can bring to discussions of student learning. I also can highlight for disciplinary faculty the important work of student affairs practitioners and their importance to the educational mission of the institution.

The most rewarding aspect of this study was what my participants gained from their participation. At the start of this research I hoped that exploring academic librarian deference behavior would bring the behavior into the consciousness of teaching focused academic librarians, and I believe I achieved that with my participants. The following excerpts from the member check illustrate that the participants found the topic important to their work. One participant stated:

Because of the amazing opportunity to participate in this study, I have learned a great deal about how to better define my own professional situation, how to
communicate it better, start conversations about it with my colleagues in and out of my library, how I could have a potential influence over the new leadership in my library, and how this opportunity has cleaned the filters of how I see my profession on campus. My radar is now fine-tuned to how we are perceived, how we participate in that perception, and how much we need to become better and more vocal advocates.

Another stated:

I’ll be very interested to read the final dissertation and wonder if it is useful to begin thinking of how this could be published for broader use. A few of my colleagues--one at another library and a staff/MLS-holder here--have been very interested in conversations about power dynamics in libraries, and the comments here affirm that this is an area in which librarianship has a lot to address.

Participants even expressed gratitude for being included in the study. Some appreciated the space to discuss these topics unfiltered and hear from other librarians about campus and library politics. Others thanked me for a chance to interact with librarians they would otherwise have never met, and others noted that the discussions were helpful to affirm their own concerns about their library and the profession. What rewarding statements to read from these colleagues at the conclusion of such a long journey. I hope I can continue to bring more librarians into discussions about our profession, our perceptions of ourselves, and our roles on our campuses.

**Conclusion**

This study showed that deference behavior is exhibited by academic librarians at 4-year institutions as they navigate their relationships with disciplinary faculty. Deference can manifest in various ways. Some librarians defer out of fear of losing relationships with faculty, which could result in losing their opportunity to teach students about information literacy. Others defer not by choice, but because they are concerned about doing things counter to the desires of library leadership. While years in profession
may be a factor in deference behavior, my findings suggest that deference is not solely dependent on age or years in profession but on other factors such as effective leadership and a librarian’s philosophical beliefs about the profession. Deference is also used strategically by some librarians in order to move forward their own goals for information literacy, but my findings suggest that access through status may make it easier to deploy deference strategically.

Without significant changes to library graduate education, innovation in onboarding processes for new librarians, and improvement in library leadership training, manifestations of deference behavior that hinder librarians’ work will persist to the detriment of future academic librarians. It is imperative that the library profession takes a serious look at how we prepare academic librarians for their roles within a changing profession and shift the training of future practitioners to pedagogy and preparation for the academy. The profession must also consider how to improve training for new and future library managers and administrators, which must include training on developing effective onboarding processes for a specific institutional context. Library leaders need to be trained to lead teaching-focused academic librarians and effectively navigate higher education structures. With better graduate curriculum specifically for future academic librarians, along with training for library leaders in higher education, academic librarians at all levels will have more confidence to engage with disciplinary faculty as peers in the educational mission of their institutions.
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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
DATE: June 3, 2019

TO: Lyda McCartin
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1431620-2] Patterns and Perceptions of Academic Librarian Reference Behavior: A Mixed Methods Study

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: June 3, 2019
EXPIRATION DATE: June 3, 2023

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Morse at 970-351-1910 or nicole.morse@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB’s records.
APPENDIX B

PHASE ONE RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATIONS
Dear Colleagues,

I am seeking self-identified teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States to participate in a study exploring academic librarian behavior and librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. Regardless of your job title, if you spend much of your time teaching, please consider participating. The purpose of the study is to better understand librarian-disciplinary faculty interactions and relationships as they pertain to information literacy instruction.

This is a mixed methods study with both a survey and focus group component. Participation in the survey does not require participation in a focus group. If you indicate a desire to continue for an interview, you may be solicited to participate in a focus groups in August-October of this year.

As a participant in the survey component you will be asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. The survey will ask you demographic questions, such as age and years in profession, as well as yes/no questions about your interactions with disciplinary faculty. If you are interested in participating in focus groups, you will be prompted for your contact information.

I appreciate your participation in this research study. Click here to complete the survey.

Thank you,

Lyda Fontes McCartin  
Head of Information Literacy and Undergraduate Support, University of Northern Colorado  
Doctoral Student, Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership, University of Northern Colorado
MANAGER RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear [Name],

I am conducting a research study exploring academic librarian behavior and librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. I am asking for your help in recruiting participants and hope that you will share this email with librarians in your department. I appreciate your help and hope that you will also consider participating.

Study Overview and Survey Link

I am seeking self-identified teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States to participate in a study exploring academic librarian behavior and librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. Regardless of your job title, if you spend much of your time teaching, please consider participating. The purpose of the study is to better understand librarian-disciplinary faculty interactions and relationships as they pertain to information literacy instruction.

This is a mixed methods study with both a survey and focus group component. Participation in the survey does not require participation in a focus group. If you indicate a desire to continue for an interview, you may be solicited to participate in a focus group in August-October of this year.

As a participant in the survey portion of the study, you will be asked to take an online survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. The survey will ask you demographic questions, such as age and years in profession, as well as yes/no questions about your interactions with disciplinary faculty. If you are interested in participating in focus groups, you will be prompted for your contact information.

I appreciate your participation in this research study. Click here to complete the survey.

Thank you,

Lyda Fontes McCartin
Head of Information Literacy and Undergraduate Support, University of Northern Colorado
Doctoral Student, Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership, University of Northern Colorado
I am seeking self-identified teaching-focused academic librarians at 4-year institutions in the United States to participate in a mixed-methods study exploring academic librarian behavior and librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. Regardless of your job title, if you spend much of your time teaching, please consider participating.

As a participant in the survey component you will be asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 15 minutes. If you are interested in participating in focus groups, you will be prompted for your contact information.

I appreciate your participation in this research study. Click here to complete the survey.
APPENDIX C

PHASE ONE INFORMED CONSENT
CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Patterns and Perceptions of Academic Librarian Deference Behavior: A Mixed Methods Study

Researcher: Lyda Fontes McCartin

Advisor: Tamara Yakaboski (tamara.yakaboski@unco.edu)

Phone: 970-351-1524

E-mail: lyda.mccartin@unco.edu

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring academic librarian behavior and librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. The purpose of the study is to better understand librarian-disciplinary faculty interactions and relationships as they pertain to information literacy instruction. This research is being conducted to fulfill the dissertation requirement for a doctorate in Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership at the University of Northern Colorado.

The Research Study

This is a mixed methods study with two distinct phases. Participants in the first phase will be asked to take a survey. Participants in the second phase will be asked to participate in focus groups. Participation in the survey does not require participation in a focus group. If you indicate a desire to continue for an interview, you may be solicited to participate in a focus group in August-October of this year.

As a participant in the first phase of this research study, you will be asked to complete the Academic Librarian Behavior Survey. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes. The survey has three parts:

- Demographics. This will include questions such as age, gender identity, years in profession, degrees attained.
- Behavior. This will include eight questions about librarian interactions with disciplinary faculty.
- Interest in Second Phase. This question will ask if you are interested in participating in the second phase of the study and, if yes, will prompt you for your contact information.
Risks and Benefits

Risks of participating in the survey phase of the study are minimal. You may feel discomfort thinking about negative work experiences. By participating in the survey, you can enter to win one of two $20 Visa cards. An indirect benefit of your participation is helping to further research in this area which may positively impact future instruction librarians and library education.

Confidentiality

I will strive to ensure that the information you share with me remains confidential. Your responses to the survey will be stored on a password protected hard drive that is maintained by the University of Northern Colorado. Data you enter for the gift card drawing will not be connected to your survey data. Only I will have access to the raw data. My dissertation committee will have access to the data analysis. I will destroy the data after three years of the collection date.

Special Considerations

Please know that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may, at any time, decline to continue in the study and you do not have to qualify your reasons for doing so. If you decide after submitting your survey that you no longer wish to participate, you may contact me, and I will remove your response from the data set. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may email me at any time with questions.

Whom to Contact

If you have questions about this study please call me or Dr. Tamara Yakaboski, my dissertation chair. Also, if you have concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, IRB Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; nicole.morse@unco.edu; 970-351-1910.

Providing Consent

Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions please complete the survey if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the survey, you give your permission to be included in this study as a participant. You are encouraged to maintain a copy of this consent form.
APPENDIX D

ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN BEHAVIOR SURVEY
ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Part 1: Demographics

Please answer the following demographic questions.


2. How many years have you been an academic librarian? Under 5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, over 25

3. To which gender identity do you most identify? Female, Male, Transgender Female, Transgender Male, Gender Variant/Non-Conforming, Not listed (write in box), prefer not to answer

4. With which ethnicity do you identify (select all that apply)? Asian, Black/African, Caucasian, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, Not Listed (write in box), prefer not to answer

5. Do you hold faculty status? Yes, No

6. [if yes] What rank do you hold? Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Lecturer, Instructor, Senior Instructor

7. Are librarians at your institution able to participate on campus committees? Yes, No

8. [if yes] Do librarians hold voting positions on committees at your institution? Yes, No, It Depends on the Committee

9. Are librarians at your institution eligible for tenure? Yes, No

10. Are librarians at your institution eligible for sabbatical? Yes, No

11. Please select the degrees you have obtained. Select all that apply. BA, MLS, MA/MS in addition to MLS, Ph.D., other (write in box)

Part II: Deference Scale

Please respond to the following questions with a yes or no answer. Provide the answer that you believe best describes your typical behavior in your interactions with disciplinary faculty. In these questions, the term disciplinary faculty refers to teaching faculty outside of the library.
An opportunity to expand on your answers is provided in Phase Two of this study during focus group interviews. If you are interested in participating in a focus group you can indicate this later in the survey.

1. Do you perceive yourself as subordinate to disciplinary faculty?

2. Do you typically cede authority to disciplinary faculty when planning library instruction sessions?

3. Do you typically defer to disciplinary faculty goals for information literacy sessions even if they have a limited or outdated understanding of the current information environment?

4. Despite a disciplinary faculty member’s limited understanding of information literacy, have you deferred to their learning goals as a way to open up dialogue about student learning?

5. Have you ever ceded power to disciplinary faculty when planning instruction sessions as a way to ensure that you can teach students?

6. Do you perceive your role as serving the disciplinary faculty at your institution?

Part III. Phase Two Participation

Are you interested in participating in a focus group for the second phase of this study?

Yes, No [if yes] Please provide your contact information. You will receive an email in approximately four weeks.

1. Full Name

2. Email

3. Current Library

[if no] Thank you for participating. If you would like to enter to win one of two $20 Visa gift cards, please follow this link. If you have questions, please contact Lyda McCartin (lyda.mccartin@unco.edu).
Visa Gift Card Survey

Thank you for participating in the survey. To enter two win one of two $20 Visa gift cards please provide your contact information. This information will not be linked to your survey responses.
[link to new survey]

Visa Survey includes two questions:

1.   Full Name

2.   Email
APPENDIX E

PHASE TWO RECRUITMENT EMAIL
Dear [Name],

Thank you for completing the Academic Librarian Behavior survey in July. I am reaching out to invite you to participate in the focus group phase of the research study. For this phase of the research I am asking participants to respond to two writing prompts and participate in two 2-hour online focus groups using Zoom. Total time for participation is no more than seven hours from August to October. The focus groups will take place in late August and September.

If you are interested in participating in the focus groups, please click here to sign the consent form and complete Writing Prompt 1. After uploading a signed consent form, please complete the first writing prompt. You will be asked to refer the Librarian Behavior Survey responses your provided which are posted at the end of this email. If you plan to participate, please click here to select your availability for the first focus group.

If you have questions about the study, please do not hesitate to email or call. I appreciate your participation in this research study.

Thank you,

Lyda Fontes McCartin
Head of Information Literacy and Undergraduate Support, University of Northern Colorado
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership, University of Northern Colorado
lyda.mccartin@unco.edu
970-351-1524

Librarian Behavior Survey Responses (insert below)
APPENDIX F

PHASE TWO INFORMED CONSENT
CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title: Patterns and Perceptions of Academic Librarian Deference Behavior: A Mixed Methods Study

Researcher: Lyda Fontes McCartin    Advisor: Tamara Yakaboski
Phone: 970-351-1524

Phone: 970-351-1156

E-mail: lyda.mccartin@unco.edu

Email: tamara.yakaboski@unco.edu

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring academic librarian behavior and librarian-faculty relationships. The purpose of the study is to better understand librarian-faculty interactions and relationships as they pertain to information literacy instruction. This research is being conducted to fulfill the dissertation requirement for a doctorate in Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership at the University of Northern Colorado.

The Research Study

This is a mixed methods study with two distinct phases. In the first phase you completed the Academic Librarian Behavior Survey. In the second phase I will ask you to respond to two writing prompts and participate in two 2-hour online focus groups using Zoom, an online meeting software. The focus group will be video recorded. Total time for participation is no more than seven hours from August-October. This phase of the study has five parts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Prompt 1:</strong> Respond to your survey results and reflect on librarian-faculty relationships</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Group 1:</strong> Participate in an online focus group with three other academic librarians.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Prompt 2:</strong> You will be provided with summaries of all of the focus groups. You will be asked to reflect on the focus groups and generate 1-2 questions to pose to the group in the second set of focus groups</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Group 2:</strong> Participate in an online focus group with three other academic librarians.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Reflection:</strong> You will be asked to provide any additional comments or express concerns about the data analysis.</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL: 7 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risks**

There is minimal risk to participation. You are joining online focus groups that will be video recorded so there is a minimal risk that another participant shares what’s been said in the focus group interviews with people not involved in the study and provides identifying information you. The writing prompts and focus groups are designed to minimize any emotional or psychological discomfort to you. However, discussing your experiences might cause unpleasant feelings. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed, you are encouraged to request a break or leave the focus group. Likewise, if I observe that the interview appears to trouble you, I will suggest that we pause or terminate the discussion.
Benefits

There are no direct benefits of participation. The indirect benefits of participation include an opportunity to contribute your experience and understanding of librarian-faculty relationships. In reflecting on and sharing your experiences and opinions you will contribute to the awareness of the complexities of building faculty relationships. You will be helping to further research in this area which may positively impact future instruction librarians and library education.

Compensation

Participants will be sent a $10 gift card after each focus group that they participate in.

Confidentiality

I will strive to ensure that the information you share with me will remain confidential. Because the focus groups include discussion of personal opinions, extra measures will be taken to protect your privacy. You will be asked to provide a pseudonym during the first writing prompt that will be used in the write-up of any data. The writing prompts will be collected through Qualtrics and will be kept on a password protected computer at UNC. The focus groups will be led by me and will be video recorded within the Zoom system. The video files will be kept on a password protected computer at UNC.

My dissertation committee will have access to your focus group interview transcripts and writing prompts. Your name, the name of your institution and library, and the names of any colleagues you may mention will not be used in my dissertation.

I will archive the transcripts and writing prompts that I collect from you indefinitely in order to permit further analysis. Because video recording cannot be anonymized, I will not share them with other researchers, and I will destroy these files within three years of the completion of the study.

Agreeing to participate in the study and signing this consent indicates that you agree to keep all focus group discussions confidential and agree that you will not share identifiable information about focus group participant with others.

Providing Consent

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910.

Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign and date this letter in the space provided below. You may e-sign or scan. Upload the signed consent form to the Qualtrics survey.

Participant Name (print) ________________________________

Participant Signature ________________________________  Date: ________________________________

Research Signature ________________________________  Date: ________________________________
APPENDIX G

WRITING PROMPTS
WRITING PROMPT 1

1. Please describe your role in your library including the type of teaching that you do and other job responsibilities.

2. Reflect on your responses to the Librarian Behavior Survey (in your email). Do these still correctly reflect your behavior in relationships with disciplinary faculty? Please expand on any response now that you have the opportunity to expand beyond a yes/no answer.

3. How would you describe a successful librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship? Can you give an example of a successful librarian-disciplinary faculty relationship you’ve built during your career?

WRITING PROMPT 2 EMAIL

Thank you for continuing your participation in this research study! Your final focus group is scheduled for [INSERT DATE]. Click here for the Zoom session.

Please complete the next writing prompt by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, September 22; I will email you the following day with a list of the participant-generated interview questions.

Below I’ve provided a list of the sources that were cited in the first focus group. I look forward to our next discussion. Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Best,

Lyda

Sources cited in first focus group


WRITING PROMPT 2

1. Please write a reflection about any topics discussed in the focus groups. This can be based on the summary and your own focus group experience.

2. Please develop 1-2 questions that you would like to pose to other participants during the second focus group relating to librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships and/or academic librarian behavior. A combined list of questions will be developed and sent to you on September 23rd.

3. Please provide answers to the following items. Here I ask for a first name pseudonym and specific details about your age and how many years you’ve been in the library profession. Earlier data you provided asked for this in ranges, not specific numbers.
   a. Full Name
   b. First Name Pseudonym
   c. Age
   d. Years in Profession

4. In order to best describe the participants in this study to readers I will write a brief paragraph about you that describes your job and work environment. The purpose of this is to provide readers with a rich description of you and your professional setting. No identifying information about your library will be included. You will also have an opportunity to read this and ask for edits if you feel something will identify you.

   In the space provided please discuss your institution (e.g., size, FTE), and your library (e.g., size, number of librarians). If you’d like to add any information about your work in addition to the description of your role in Writing Prompt 1, please do so. Also consider providing any other information about your daily work such as campus/professional committees and/or leadership positions you hold on campus or within the profession if you did not mention this in Writing Prompt 1.
1. In the attached document you will find the final themes of the research study. These themes are based on all 10 focus groups. For each theme you will find an explanation and (in most cases) representative excerpts from the data. Please note that these data are not exhaustive and much more will be included in the dissertation. The purpose of this review is to give you an opportunity to consider whether these experiences or perceptions apply to you and/or if you see them as reflective of the profession. Additionally, this is another opportunity for you to reflect on your own experience and add to the co-construction of our knowledge around academic librarian behavior. Please review the themes and provide feedback in the space provided. You can reflect on some or all of themes—how you provide feedback is up to you.

2. In the attached file you will find bio statements for each participant in the study using the determined pseudonym. These bios were created from the information you provided in your writing prompts. Please review your bio and provide any edits that you’d like. Feel free to add text to your bio but also be sure to delete any content that you feel will be identifying.

3. Please list your preferred pronouns. Your preferred pronouns will be used when writing.

4. If you would like to provide any additional feedback about the research study please do so here.
FIRST FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE

Moderator Notes

- Change chat feature to private chat with moderator only.
- Make sure all participants are un-muted.
- Turn computer volume to max volume.
- Be sure to have the printed moderator script, note paper, and two writing utensils.
- Offer a brief welcome to participants as they join the Zoom session. Test microphones with members as they come in.

Introductory Content

Welcome Entire Group

Welcome and thank you for joining me for this discussion. Each of you has been selected to participate because your point of view is important. I know that you are quite busy and greatly appreciate your contribution to this project. I am very interested in what you think and feel and ask that you share your honest opinions and ideas in this space.

Introduction to the Focus Group

The purpose of this discussion is to determine your ideas and opinions about librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships and librarian roles on campus.

We will begin with group introductions and then I’ll guide the discussion using two different activities that will ask you to respond to statements from current literature on librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships. In today’s discussion there are no set interview questions, but I may ask follow-up/clarifying questions during the discussion.

Just a few Zoom logistics--you can see the Zoom navigation and options by hovering at the bottom of your screen. To chat, select the chat icon and a chat box will open. You can organize the view of all participants in various ways and you can drag the smaller icons to move them around on your screen. Any questions about navigation? Okay, feel free to ask me any questions as we move forward about Zoom navigation.
Guidelines for Focus Group

I want to mention some guidelines for today’s discussion:

- You do not need to speak in any particular order. When you have something to say, please do so. If you feel that you are not able to speak during the discussion, please use the private chat feature so that I know to call on you. I will monitor the chat window if you need to send me a private message. This can also be used if you are hesitant to say something to the group, but you want something added to the discussion. I can include a comment anonymously that is provided through the chat. As this is a discussion, we will not use the group chat feature. Please voice your comments to the entire group.

- I want you all to do the talking and I want everyone to participate so I may call on you if I have not heard from you in a while.

- There are no right or wrong answers today. Every person’s experiences and opinions are important. Please be respectful of differences and speak up whether you agree or disagree.

- I want folks to be comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up and I want to hear a wide range of opinions. Please know and remember that what is said during this discussion stays between all of us and everything is confidential.

- I am recording this group discussion as I want to capture everything you have to say. I will not identify anyone by name in any written document. Your names will remain confidential. Following the focus group you will provide me with a pseudonym.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

I am starting to record now.

Note to Moderator: SELECT RECORD

Warm-Up

Okay, we will begin with introductions. Each person will have two minutes to introduce themselves with your name, your home library (if you are comfortable sharing that with the group, your role at your library, and your best strategy for building relationships with faculty [Note, these questions were sent earlier in the email with the Zoom link]. I’m sharing my screen with you to remind you of these prompts. [Note to moderator--share screen with powerpoint].
Welcome again everyone, and thanks for sharing.

Are there any questions for any of the participants?

Focusing Exercises

Exercise 1

For our first activity I’m going to present two sets of statements on the screen. Each set presents opposing viewpoints about academic librarians’ roles on campus. In the polling box on your screen, I’d like you to select the statement you agree with more.

Note to Moderator: LAUNCH POLL

Set 1:

Academic librarians should oversee information literacy curriculum on campus.
Academic librarians should advocate for integration of information literacy into the work of all faculty and support faculty in this work.

Review Results and Discuss

Set 2:

Academic librarians should develop a teacher orientation, where they pursue their own goals for student learning.

Academic librarians should develop a service orientation where they focus on satisfying another faculty member’s goals for student learning.
**Review Results and Discuss**

Possible probing questions for discussion:

- Do you see these conflicting statements in your own work?

- For folks who most agreed with overseeing information literacy on campus--does this happen at your institution? If so, how?

- For folks who most agreed with developing a service orientation, how do you see that influencing how you build relationships with disciplinary faculty?

- Does faculty status impact your beliefs?

**Exercise 2**

*For this activity I am going to present four quotes from the library literature about academic librarian behavior. Once I post and read the quote, you will take two minutes to write your reaction to the quote. After the quotes are presented, we will discuss as a group.* [Note to Moderator--share screen to show powerpoint with quotes].

*Quote 1*

The librarians “deferred to faculty goals for information literacy sessions, even if the professor had a limited or outdated understanding of the current information environment” (Downey, 2016, p. 99).

*Time one minute for writing*

*Quote 2*

The librarians ceded “power, authority, and knowledge of curriculum to the teaching faculty” (Julien & Pecoskie, 2009, p. 151)

*Time one minute for writing*

*Quote 3*

Librarians were “reluctant to be seen as intruding on faculty territory” (Downey, 2016, p. 129).
Time one minute for writing

*Quote 4*

Librarians “are afraid to say no or offend, preferring to stick with preconceived roles as nice people” (Given & Julien, 2005, p. 35).

Time one minute for writing

*Okay, let’s open this up for discussion. What are your reactions to this set of quotes from our literature?*

*I can go back to certain quotes if you’d like.*

Possible probing questions for discussion

- Do you see this in the work of colleagues in your library?
- Do you or have you deferred in this way?
- Have you done this as a way to get your foot in the door to make a new connection?

Concluding Content

Wrap-Up

*Any final thoughts you want to share with the group that you were not able to say earlier or just thought of now? It’s okay to jump around.*

Concluding Remarks

*Thank you for joining today’s discussion. Please remember to keep the information from the focus groups confidential.*

I will share a summary of the discussions that come from the first set of focus groups. There is a total of [#] focus groups with a total of [#] participants. This is focus group [#] of [#]. On [DATE] you will receive an email from me with the summary and a link to a Qualtrics form. In that form you will be able to complete the final writing prompt and sign up for your second focus group. Your next focus group will be with a different mix of participants.

*Can I answer any questions for you before we end the discussion?*

*Feel free to email or call with any questions.*
End Zoom Session

Wait for all participants to sign-off of Zoom before ending the session in case there are questions participants want to ask in private.
APPENDIX I

SECOND FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE
SECOND FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE

Moderator Notes

- Change chat feature to private chat with moderator only.
- Make sure all participants are un-muted.
- Turn computer volume to max volume.
- Be sure to have the printed moderator script, note paper, and two writing utensils.
- Offer a brief welcome to participants as they join the Zoom session. Test microphones with members as they come in.

Introductory Content

Welcome Entire Group

Welcome and thank you for joining me for this discussion. I know that you are quite busy and greatly appreciate your contribution to this project. The conversations in the first set of focus groups were excellent, and I appreciate everyone’s candor and thoughtfulness in the second writing prompt. I am very interested in what you think and feel and ask that you share your honest opinions and ideas in this space.

Introduction to the Focus Group

The purpose of this discussion is to determine your ideas and opinions about librarian-disciplinary faculty relationships and librarian roles on campus and to continue our conversation from last month with a new group of colleagues.

We will begin with group introductions and then I’ll ask a series of questions generated from the second writing prompt. This is semi-structured, so we may not get to every question depending on the discussion. Following the questions, I will ask you to respond to statements from the literature about librarians’ roles on campus.

Just a reminder about Zoom logistics--you can see the Zoom navigation and options by hovering at the bottom of your screen. To chat, select the chat icon and a chat box will open. You can organize the view of all participants in various ways and you can drag the smaller icons to move them around on your screen. Any questions about navigation? Okay, feel free to ask me any questions as we move forward about Zoom navigation.
Guidelines for Focus Group

I want to mention some guidelines for today’s discussion:

- You do not need to speak in any particular order. When you have something to say, please do so. If you feel that you are not able to speak during the discussion, please use the private chat feature so that I know to call on you. I will monitor the chat window if you need to send me a private message. This can also be used if you are hesitant to say something to the group, but you want something added to the discussion. I can include a comment anonymously that is provided through the chat. As this is a discussion, we will not use the group chat feature. Please voice your comments to the entire group.

- I want you all to do the talking and I want everyone to participate so I may call on you if I have not heard from you in a while.

- There are no right or wrong answers today. Every person’s experiences and opinions are important. Please be respectful of differences and speak up whether you agree or disagree.

- I want folks to be comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up and I want to hear a wide range of opinions. Please know and remember that what is said during this discussion stays between all of us and everything is confidential.

- I am recording this group discussion as I want to capture everything you have to say. I will not identify anyone by name in any written document. Your names will remain confidential. Following the focus group, you will provide me with a pseudonym.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

I am starting to record now.

Note to Moderator: SELECT RECORD
Warm-Up

Okay, we will begin with introductions. Each person will have two minutes to introduce themselves with your name, your home library (if you are comfortable sharing that with the group, your role at your library, and your most interesting take-away from your first focus group [Note, these questions were sent earlier in the email with the Zoom link]. I’m sharing my screen with you to remind you of these prompts. [Note to moderator--share screen with powerpoint]

- Name
- Library
- Role at their library
- Most interesting take-away from first focus group

Participant Generated Questions

Participant questions developed in Writing Prompt Two. There will be five participant generated questions, which will be sent to the participants in advance. Depending on the discussion the moderator will ask 1-5 questions during the focus group.

Focusing Exercise

For this activity I am going to present statements from our professional literature about academic librarians’ role on campus in the context of information literacy/library instruction. I am going to present the quotes one at a time in a polling box. I’d like you to select if you agree or disagree with the statement. Once all of the statements are voted on, we will discuss as a group. I will bring the quotes back up for our discussion.

Quote 1

When it comes to information literacy, “librarians must cease being at the service of faculty.” They must “sometimes say ‘no’ . . . and instead question, engage, and converse with faculty” (Meulemans & Carr, 2013, p. 81).

Time one minute to answer Agree or Disagree

Quote 2

“The future of academic librarianship depends on the ability to integrate services and practices into the teaching and learning process” (Mavodza, 2011, p. 448).
Time one minute to answer Agree or Disagree

Quote 3

Librarians must take equal, “and if necessary, primary agency in the construction of the [information literacy] learning environment for students” or else risk being “an automaton that serves the needs of faculty” (Meulemans & Carr, 2013, p. 88).

Time one minute to answer Agree or Disagree

Quote 4

The goal for academic librarians should be to “construct a comprehensive information literacy program centered in the library and with the full and complete academic ambitions of a teaching department” (Owusu-Ansah, 2004, p. 11).

Time one minute to answer Agree or Disagree

Okay, let’s open this up for discussion. What are your reactions to this set of quotes from our literature?

I can go back to certain quotes if you’d like.

Possible probing questions for discussion:

- If everyone agrees with these statements, what is holding librarians back from answering these calls?
- If you disagree, what is the teaching-focused librarian role on campus?
- Should academic librarians be auxiliary services, or more on the side of the academic enterprise?
- Are you answering these calls in your work?
- How can we do this on campus?
- Are there consequences for not answering these calls?
Concluding Content

Wrap-Up

Any final thoughts you want to share with the group that you were not able to say earlier or just thought of now? It’s okay to jump around.

Concluding Remarks

Thank you for joining today’s discussion. Please remember to keep the information from the focus groups confidential.

I will share a summary of the data analysis that comes from your writing prompts and focus group discussions. I don’t have a date for this yet, but I will email you a week in advance to let you know that the document is coming. Along with the document you will also have a link to a Qualtrics form where you can provide feedback on the data analysis.

Can I answer any questions for you before we end the discussion?

Feel free to email or call with any questions.

End Zoom Session

Wait for all participants to sign-off of Zoom before ending the session in case there are questions participants want to ask in private.