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"I am more productive in the library because it's quiet": Commuter students in the college library

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"I Am More Productive in the Library Because It's Quiet": Commuter Students in the College Library

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This article discusses commuter students' experiences with the academic library, drawn from a qualitative study at the City University of New York. Undergraduates at six community and baccalaureate colleges were interviewed to explore how they fit schoolwork into their days, and the challenges and opportunities they encountered. Students identified physical and environmental features that informed their ability to successfully engage in academic work in the library. They valued the library as a distraction-free place for academic work, in contrast to the constraints they experienced in other places—including in their homes and on the commute.

O f all locations on a college campus, the library has perhaps the strongest institutional expectation as a place where independent academic work occurs. Studies of behavior in libraries have found that students equate going to the library with doing schoolwork; indeed, going to the library has long been considered as a ritual critical to true academic engagement.[1] While there has been much recent research on student use of library spaces, commuter colleges—which typically encompass community colleges—are underrepresented in the literature. We recently concluded a qualitative study of the scholarly habits of undergraduates at the City University of New York (CUNY) to learn about how they fit schoolwork into their days, the challenges and opportunities they encountered, and what the experience meant to them. We heard from students about several locations in which they engaged in their academic work, and this article discusses the ways that the college library did—and did not—fit into their academic landscapes. For many CUNY students, the college library is a critical component of their academic lives; however, we also met students who expressed frustrations with using their college library for academic work.

Literature Review

Interest in understanding student use of academic libraries is widespread, as is the use of ethnographic and other qualitative methods to investigate student library use. This can be seen in the growing number of recent publications, many summarized and cited by Khoo, Rozaklis, and Hall.[2] The literature in this area broadly examines the

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scholarly atmosphere of libraries, the diversity of activities and space needs in libraries, and the challenges of overlapping academic and nonacademic behaviors in libraries.

Many recent studies have focused on students' activities in and use of library spaces. Decades of research since Bourdieu, Passeron, and de Saint Martin[3] have found that students appreciate an academic library that looks academic, notably Cunningham and Tabur,[4] Elmborg,[5] and Freeman, who suggests that students "want to experience a sense of inspiration" in the college library and points to the traditional book-lined reading room as a key feature. [6] A study at Portland State University found that expectation of the library as a place for academic work was signaled by "general layout of a library [and] the organization of the material," which are designed to guide behavior.[7] Bennett examined campus study spaces across six institutions and found that students and faculty perceived libraries as study spaces that are best for "fostering learning behaviors important to them,"[8] results also found by Brown-Sica,[9] Cox,[10] and Jackson and Hahn.[11] In addition, multiple studies have reported on students' strong preference for good light—sunlight, if at all possible—when they work in their academic library.[12]

Treadwell, Binder, and Tagge, part of the Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries (ERIAL)[13] project, noted that student space needs were fluid and encompassed many locations and types of furniture.[14] The seminal library study at University of Rochester's *Second Look* also found a need for a "variety of environments to facilitate effective study" and "spaces in the library set aside to accommodate a number of different study styles and scenarios."[15] Interestingly, in comparing results from their 2004 study with the 2011 *Second Look*, the authors note that "that library spaces have increased as preferred study areas for students, that studying with friends is becoming more important, and that, at the same time, students are concerned with atmosphere, noise, and their ability to focus."[16]

An earlier study at Brock University in Canada that used both participant observation and interviews also revealed the breadth of activities and levels of scholarly engagement of college students in that library.[17] Indeed, a number of studies have shown that many nonacademic activities such as eating, socializing, and sleeping also occur in the college library (see, for example, Cunningham and Tabur,[18] Gayton,[19] Lanclos,[20] Mizrachi,[21] and Suarez).[22] The challenges of competing uses for campus spaces, particularly the library, are greater for commuter students. Molteni, Goldman, and Oulc'hen found that students "seek to integrate their student and personal lives" in part because they lacked spaces on campus to keep them separate.[23] Delcore, Mullooly, and Scroggins learned that, for commuter students they met, multiple, overlapping, and sometimes competing academic and nonacademic activities were integral to their success or failure in creating study spaces for themselves.[24]
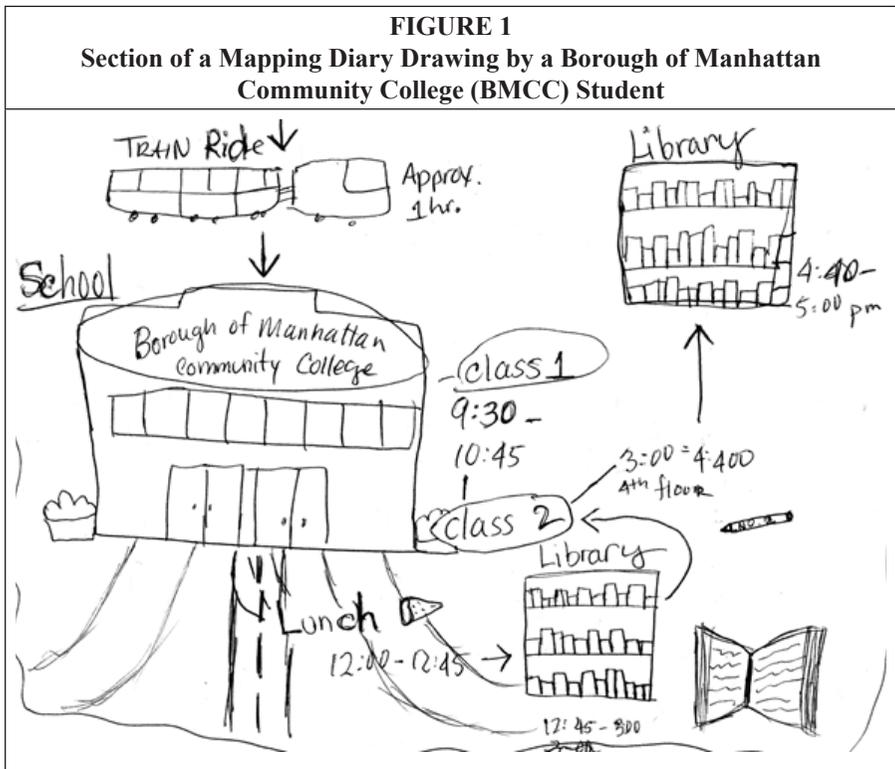
Our research complements and extends other studies by examining the experiences of students attending public, urban commuter colleges, including two community colleges. Most of the recent qualitative studies of undergraduates, including those discussed above, have focused largely on students at baccalaureate schools or universities and on campuses that are primarily residential. The community college population is notably underrepresented in studies of students, especially given that, by fall 2012, 45 percent of all undergraduates in the United States attended a community college.[25] Also underrepresented in studies is the experience of commuter students. While two recent studies—at Fresno State and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis—focus on diverse, urban commuter colleges, commuter students at both schools are more likely to drive to campus than to use mass transit, which is by far the predominant mode of transportation for CUNY's urban student population. The findings of our study of CUNY students add to this growing body of work on student experiences and participation in higher education in the early twenty-first century.

Methodology and Research Context

To explore the student experience in depth, we used research techniques from ethnography, a cornerstone of anthropology, that are useful to understanding "why" questions, such as why a student made the choices she did about when and where to do her academic work.[26] Our study encompassed a number of research questions; this article reports on data we collected about the student experience in academic libraries—specifically: how do students use the library for their coursework, and if they don't, why not?[27] In collecting data we used three research methods—mapping diaries, photo surveys, and retrospective research process interviews—with 178 students at six CUNY colleges during 2009–2011, as well as open-ended interviews with 10–13 faculty at each college.[28] Students were recruited via fliers posted throughout each campus; after completing our interviews, each student who participated received a public transit card or gift card for between $15 and $30. This project was approved by our Institutional Review Boards and by the administration at each college, and all participants completed consent forms.

For the mapping diaries, we asked approximately 10 students at each college to log their activity—including location and time—during a typical school day on a log that we created for them. We also asked students to draw their progress through that day. While some students drew their own maps or traced public transit maps, others sketched stick figures and still others created comic-like stories of their days. After logging one day's activity, each student met with us for a brief interview to review their log and drawings to elaborate and add details to the text and images.

For the photo surveys, we gave approximately 10 students at each college a list of locations or objects related to their scholarly work. Examples of photo prompts include

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FIGURE 1

Section of a Mapping Diary Drawing by a Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) Student

"a place in the library where you study," "a place at school that you don't like," "your favorite place to study," and "a place at home where you study." We asked each student to take a picture for each prompt using either a disposable camera or their own camera, often a cellphone camera. After completing the list of pictures and sharing them with us, each student met with us for a brief interview in which we looked at the photos together and asked students to explain each picture and how it related to the photo prompt.

For the retrospective research process interviews, we asked approximately 10 students at each college to describe their process in completing a research assignment, beginning with the moment they received the assignment from their professors and ending once they had handed the assignment in and, in most cases, received a grade. During these interviews, we asked students to draw the research process as they described it, and again we collected a range of images from the students, from stick figure drawings to flowcharts.

All student interviews were recorded, and we hired research assistants to transcribe them to text. We then coded and cross-checked all interview text using the ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software and analyzed the resulting data to focus on predominant themes that emerged during student interviews. It is important to note that we sought to learn about how and where students engaged in their academic work rather than the specific types of work they engaged in. Thus, we use various terms synonymously to refer to the work that students do as part of their course of study in college, including studying, homework, schoolwork, scholarly work, and course work.

A majority minority institution, CUNY's mission is to provide a quality education to traditionally underserved populations. With a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate programs on 24 campuses across the five boroughs of New York City, CUNY's approximately 270,000 degree-seeking students make it the largest urban public university in the United States. In spring 2010, 54 percent of CUNY undergraduates reported a household income of $30,000 or less, and 20 percent were the first in their family to attend college. The university is a predominantly commuter institution, and more than 75 percent of students report traveling to campus using mass transit, the large majority with commute times between 30 and 90 minutes.[29] We conducted our study at colleges chosen to represent the range within the university, including community, comprehensive, and baccalaureate colleges (at CUNY called senior colleges). We also sought to include colleges that represent the diversity of campus spaces across the university, selecting three colleges with spacious, traditional, quadrangle layouts as well as three with more urban, dense, space-constrained campuses.

A brief description of the main library at each college in our study (see table 1) will situate this research (enrollment figures are from fall 2011).[30] While there are similarities in features and functionality of the main campus library at each of the six CUNY colleges in our study, there are differences in the location and layout of each library as there are for each campus more generally. Of particular note is that the main libraries at the three senior colleges are physically much larger and have more seating available than the libraries at the comprehensive college or the two community colleges at which we interviewed students.

Studying in the Library

The students we spoke with described many features of their college libraries that factored into their preference for the library as a study location. These features ranged from the amenities or constraints of the physical library, such as walls, doors, and furniture, to the level of light and noise in a particular area. All of the main college libraries in our study include a variety of furniture and room types that students might use either

College	Library Size, in ft²	Number of Floors	Number of Seats without Computer/ with Computer*	Number of Group Study Rooms	Enrolled Students Fall 2011
TABLE 1					
Physical Size, Seating, Available Computers and Students Enrolled in the Main Libraries at CUNY Research Sites					
BMCC	52,000	1	550/36	2	>24,463
Brooklyn College	197,000	5	1,500/500	17	>16,835
Bronx Community College†	32,500	2	300/80	1‡	>11,450
City College§	175,000	5	1,600/700	10	>16,005
Hunter College¶	170,000	9	1,187/250	6	>22,822
New York City College of Technology (City Tech)	40,000	2	362/63	5	>15,961

* Overall seating includes open seating at carrels, tables, and chairs, but not classrooms or group study space.

† In fall 2012 the newly constructed library building opened at Bronx CC. The new library is somewhat larger than the old, with substantially more seating, available computers, and group study rooms. In addition, it features many floor-to-ceiling windows that let in natural light; the old library was in a basement with no windows in public areas. Our discussion here focuses on the old library that was in use during our data collection in 2010–2011.

‡ Bronx CC's library's one group study room was a single room with four large tables meant to accommodate multiple groups of students at the same time.

§ City College and Hunter College each feature one main library and multiple smaller, specialized libraries. In this study, we focus on the main library at each: the Cohen Library at City College and what was then known as the Wexler Library at Hunter College (renamed the Cooperman Library after renovations in 2013).

¶ One floor of Hunter College's main library has been renovated since our study was completed; these data are accurate for the library during the time of our study.

individually or in groups, including carrel desks (often termed "cubicles" or "cubbies" by the students), tables of multiple shapes and sizes with chairs, enclosed study rooms of varying sizes, and larger open spaces often surrounded by or adjacent to the stacks. When describing their favorite place in the library for their academic work, students usually included information about each of these features. Each student's preferences about where she worked in the library were typically very strong.

The students we met understood and could articulate an institutional and cultural expectation of the library as a place for scholarly work; many chose to study in a library for this reason. For them the library was a place to seek a transformative experience, a place where they not only could, but also, if the rules of behavior such as turning off cellphones and resisting conversation were followed, indeed must be students first and foremost. So important was the organizing effect of the library as place that for a few students who described themselves as studious and academically motivated, finding a "serious" library was imperative to creating an adequate space for study. For some, their own college library provided such a location, while others sought alternatives when they sought to constitute academic spaces for themselves in the library.

One way students we spoke with communicated their understanding of the academic atmosphere of library as a key location for the academic experience was with

their responses to our photo survey prompt "one picture of the library to show a new student." Student photos included physical features such as areas near book stacks and those with many windows and natural light, service desks, areas such as the course reserves and photocopiers, as well as resources such as computers, and study rooms. The students explained their photographic choices by emphasizing the utility of these resources and services to their studies. Each also conveyed a desire to encourage peers to take advantage of all that the library offered during their college careers. For example, this City Tech student emphasized the scholarly quality of her small campus library.

> *A lot of library pictures don't show a lot of books, and [this photo] shows that even though the library is small, it has a lot of books.*

More prosaic features of the library drew students in as well, seating choices in particular. Many students we interviewed across all six colleges identified the humble, often somewhat older, study carrel as their preferred academic workspace at the library. For each of these students, carrels represented a private, individual space that she valued highly, often because of a stated difficulty finding a similarly private spot for her work in other areas of the campus or at home. As can be seen in the student remarks below, many students who preferred carrels noted the high walls surrounding the desk as a critical attribute of this type of furniture, one that made it far easier to focus on the academic task at hand and avoid distractions.

> *Yeah, the carrel desk. 'Cause it's, like, uh, I have, like, some privacy which is, uh, a thing lacking at …So, I have some kinda privacy when I study in those types of things.*

FIGURE 2
Student Photo of Study Carrel at the Brooklyn College Library

And also, sometimes I just like being secluded, you know, blocked out. There's no distractions. If you work on a big table there's a tendency to look up, wonder a bit, and then you get nothing done.

A smaller number of students told us that they preferred to work at a table in the library, with a partner or in a group as well as alone. For each of these students, the opportunity to spread out her academic materials—books, laptops, notebooks, writing implements, and other supplies—on the table surface was an important component of her academic strategy because she appreciated having ready access to the materials she used in her work. Some of these students mentioned feeling too constrained when they attempted to sit at a carrel desk to work.

All of the libraries we visited provided group study rooms for students that allowed two or more students to work together in an enclosed area to contain conversational noise and avoid disturbing students at work in other areas of the library. Overall, the students we spoke with placed less emphasis on library areas for group study than we anticipated, given both the prominence of the information commons model for academic libraries and evidence from other institutions of student appreciation of flexible group study locations.[31] Yet, despite the apparent need for group study space, at least as perceived by library or college administrators, students in many studies consistently indicate a preference for quiet study space.[32] Our findings accord with this; students did not mention group study rooms as frequently as other areas for study in the library, and about half of the students we interviewed expressed a strong preference for studying alone rather than in a group.

Illumination emerged as an important component of the desire to construct an academic space in the college library for most of the students we interviewed. Many of the CUNY libraries feature standard, institutional fluorescent lighting that can be dim and uninspiring. The opportunity to sit near a window varied based on the specific layout of each library, though (if no windows were available) bright overhead lighting or focused table lighting was often mentioned as the preferred substitute. Here a City Tech student explains her choice of study area.

I like windows when I study, I like to be able to see and I need light, so I chose this area cause it's a wide-open space, which was nice and it had a lot of tables.

Like lighting, noise level was an environmental feature that students felt strongly about when accomplishing schoolwork in their college library. Most students we spoke with expressed a strong inclination toward quiet when they engaged in academic work. All of the libraries in our study provided unenclosed group study areas in which some low conversation was permitted; some students mentioned their desire to avoid those areas as they tended to be noisy. Several students specifically pointed out that tables seemed to encourage conversation. As mentioned above regarding carrel desks, many students preferred to create their academic space in the library because they were better able to work without the distractions they encountered more frequently in other locations. Academic libraries are typically associated with quiet study and contemplation; for many students, this was a valuable attribute of their campus library, as this Bronx CC student spelled out.

Because school is quiet, while I have family at home. So, you know, everyone's watching TV, there are kids running around, so I really need the quiet.

Library Study Frustrations

While many students preferred to do their scholarly work at the college library because of the privacy and quiet they found there, other students were inhibited or frustrated by the presence of others or the traces of others' activities there. Some students told us that their campus library was too loud, too messy, or too crowded to work in or that other students socializing and eating interfered with their own attempts to constitute an academic space. Though the academic library has a strong institutional expectation as a studious place, and behavior there is regulated both by representatives of the institution (the librarians) and even students themselves, we did meet students who created a social space in the library to meet friends or a personal space for eating, both uses that transgressed institutional expectations for behavior.[33]

One Hunter College student described his frustration when studying on what was supposed to be a quiet study floor due to the interruptions he experienced when trying to concentrate alongside other students' conversations. This floor of the library includes only study areas and stacks and has no public service desks. It is possible that the library faculty and staff spent less time walking through this floor, which may have contributed to a perception among students that the quiet study rules could be broken.

> *Like, one time I was studying there and, like, people just came and sat on my table and started eating and talking and, like, I couldn't finish my work. And I just feel like there should be people, like, telling them, "Look, you're not supposed to eat here." Kind of enforcing the library rules.*

In addition to ten larger group study rooms, the main library at City College has 117 two-person study rooms, each with a long desk and space for two chairs. The lack of doors on these rooms means that in practice they are used primarily for individual study or at most quiet conversations between a pair of students. One student complained that these smaller study rooms on the first floor of the library were dirty and covered in graffiti; he expressed frustration that his fellow students did not treat the library with respect. Several BMCC students mentioned the tables just inside the library entrance as being too noisy and conducive to socializing to be useful for studying. Another student at City Tech complained about noise coming into the library from a lounge area on the other side of an emergency exit at one end of the quiet study floor.

Going Beyond the Main College Library

The importance of the library to creating academic space was underscored by some students who had difficulty creating an academic space for themselves in their college libraries but sought out alternate libraries in which to do their schoolwork. Though at many CUNY colleges there is only one library, some campuses do have smaller, specialized libraries; a few students described these alternate libraries as a preferred campus study location, such as the Hunter College art library and the City College science library. Preference for these smaller libraries as less crowded and quieter than the main college library was articulated by a Hunter College student.

> *I think it's, like, the best kept secret at Hunter. No one knows where it is except the art students. […] And most days when I go there, there's only about two or three people at that table. So you have the room to kind of spread your stuff out. And it's really, really quiet because there's no one there.*

Other students who described difficulties in accomplishing scholarly work at their home campus library were able to work more successfully at another college library

FIGURE 4
Student Photo of the Hunter College Art Library

within the CUNY system. These libraries often had been renovated or remodeled more recently than students' home college libraries; they sometimes contained additional amenities such as specialized lighting and comfortable seating. All of these combined to create a more scholarly, "serious" library atmosphere that these students preferred to what they experienced at their home college libraries. This accords with research at diverse institutions such as the University of Rochester,[34] the University of Illinois Springfield,[35] and the University of Maryland, University of Arizona, and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign,[36] which has revealed that, for many students, a traditional academic library full of books and formal furniture provides a serious setting that they found encourages and supports their academic work.

One student preferred to study at a senior college in another part of the city, because the library is less crowded than Hunter College, and another student preferred another senior college because printing was "easier" than at City Tech. A Hunter College student described in detail the environmental considerations that led her to vastly prefer using the library at yet another senior college, including carrels with windows and softer seating. By far, the CUNY library mentioned most frequently as an alternate place that students enjoyed working in was the library at Baruch College, CUNY's business college. The library has a formal, corporate look and atmosphere that many students found appealing, and its mid-Manhattan location also makes it relatively easy to travel to from other parts of the city, as this City College student relates.

I have a couple of friends that go to Baruch and study, so we started going together this semester. And I notice that it's more EFFECTIVE at the Baruch library …It's not as much distractions, I guess, with the architecture, the structure of the building, I guess. And the lighting! They have table lamps, which is very neat. And it provides you with this feeling of …I don't know, I feel like I'm in my own room, a big room with a big table, with a nice table lamp, a nice cushioned seat, and …that works for me. That works PERFECTLY for me.

Students from across the six colleges described their use of a public library, some instead of and others in addition to their college library. New York City is fortunate to host three large public library systems: the New York Public Library includes branch libraries in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, as well as four research libraries located in Manhattan; Brooklyn and Queens each have their own public library system that includes branch libraries and a larger central library. Convenience was a factor for several students who used the public library that was close to her home in addition to her college library. Often these students noted that they were able to find books at the public libraries that were not available in their college library, or books that they could use to supplement the resources from their college library. Other students indicated that they used the public library for functions that were available at their college library or on their college campus but about which they were unaware. For example, a Brooklyn College student used the computers at the college library yet asked for assistance from reference librarians at the public library, as he did not realize that there were reference librarians available at his college library as well. A City Tech student preferred using the public library computers because some computer labs at the college had filtering software installed to block leisure-related websites. She was unaware that her college library offered computers with unfettered access to the Internet.

> Well I usually go [to the public library] after school because the internet I think is more better because the internet in the school, like some areas are restricted and most of the time I just want to go on for fun since I don't have a computer or internet in my home.

These findings are consistent with the results of a recent study of the research behaviors of first-generation college students and Hispanic students at two universities in Chicago, which reported that students often continued to use the public library while in college because the resources, services, and spaces were more familiar to them than at their campus library.[37]

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

> I live in the library. The library is like my full-time job. When I don't have classes, I still come to the library because there's too many distractions at home and in order for me to be a successful, productive student, I have to come to school, to remain dedicated and driven.

Much of what we learned from speaking with CUNY students is congruent with results reported in other studies of student use of the campus and the library. However, much of the available published research was undertaken at colleges and universities with very different characteristics and demographics than the CUNY system: either those with small or nonexistent commuter enrollment or commuter institutions in suburban or rural areas. During the 2011–2012 academic year, nearly 88 percent of U.S. undergraduates commuted to campus,[38] a number that is sure to increase, especially as enrollment in community colleges continues to grow. It is important to understand where the needs of commuter students align with those of students who live in campus housing—and where they differ—so that librarians, administrators, and faculty can effectively learn from research into student library use at residential institutions.

We also identified similarities between the experiences and preferences of CUNY students and those at a few other commuter institutions. The Library Study at California State University Fresno found that commuter students there often struggled over competing desires for social and scholarly use of space in the library and on campus more generally.[39] A study of three institutions in Denver that share one academic library

revealed that their commuter students wanted more computers to be available for their use and more quiet areas for study,[40] which we heard from our CUNY students as well.

However, we found that the features of living, commuting, and attending college in a dense urban setting influenced the preferences of CUNY students in ways that differed from other commuter institutions. In particular, CUNY students highly valued the privacy they could find in the college library, especially the protection from distraction offered by carrel desks. Students at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis did use carrels, though primarily in the context of "surge capacity" as the number of students in the library increased during midterm and final exam periods.[41] And, while students in Fresno did study in the library, they also noted a variety of private spaces in their homes that they used for academic work (for example, a crafts room and a garage).[42] Most of the CUNY students we spoke with mentioned a pressing need for private, quiet space for their academic work and appreciated the carrel desk in stark opposition to other shared locations they had access to in other parts of the library, on campus, or in their homes.

The CUNY student experience suggests issues that any academic library might wish to address, though they are perhaps particularly pressing for institutions that enroll commuter students who live in shared housing off-campus. Noise control is crucial to consider, as most students need quiet spaces to work and commuter students often lack for them outside the library. While some libraries may have the facilities to devote to silent study rooms or areas, like Holyoke Community College in Massachusetts,[43] others may consider signage, publicity campaigns, or increased staff time devoted to walking throughout the library as ways to encourage a quiet atmosphere. Students also appreciate design and furnishings that indicate that the library is a place for serious academic work. While collections may be shifting to include more digital than physical volumes, librarians should consider ways to retain the academic atmosphere that book stacks convey.

The past decade has seen an increase in academic library redesign to incorporate the information commons model, which emphasizes the need for flexible spaces and furniture that can accommodate many different student needs.[44] Further, a recent and increasing emphasis on group work in higher education has led many academic libraries to expand or improve group study spaces for students.[45] Several recent ethnographic library projects asked students to design their ideal libraries, many of which depicted a preference for collaborative, flexible group areas.[46] The traditional individual library carrel desk does not feature prominently in the information commons, yet we met many students for whom the carrel desk was their favorite place for academic work. Additionally, one large, multi-institution study found that both students and faculty viewed studying alone as more important than studying in groups.[47] Further research on the information commons model—including studying student use both before and after renovations—could benefit academic libraries that serve a wide range of students and institutions, encouraging selection of appropriate information commons features rather than a monolithic model for library facilities and services.

Additional limitations of this study could be usefully addressed with future research. As noted above, our data was collected in 2009–2011; a follow-up study could be undertaken to explore whether CUNY students' experiences in their libraries have changed since our initial research. While most of these libraries have not implemented any major changes to their spaces and collections since then, enrollment at the university has continued to increase, without concurrent increases in physical facilities at many campuses. Further, two of the libraries have made major physical changes since 2011. Hunter College has renovated the entrance floor of the library, including new seating types and service desk arrangements, a renovation that was informed in part

by our research. The Bronx CC library is now located in a newly constructed building that opened in fall 2012; while construction was already underway during our data collection, the new library incorporates many of the features that we heard students request, such as more computers and natural light.

Further research could also explore several themes that arose during our data collection but were outside the scope of our original study. Many students, at CUNY and other urban institutions with significant numbers of commuters, use both academic and public libraries for their college coursework.[48] It would be useful to hear from those students who use both types of libraries about their preferences and experiences, as well as from librarians at public and academic libraries, and to consider programming to support these students in their academic work. Additionally, academic support for commuter college and university students is increasingly becoming a focus of the literature on student affairs and engagement.[49] Further research could extend the results of this and other studies of academic libraries that serve commuter students, add to the conversation on the unique needs of this population, and contribute to services to support commuter student success.

Sufficient study space has been found to foster learning and studious behavior, including the library as well as other locations,[50] and confirms the critical importance of "adequate facilities in the library, student center, and academic buildings for students to study, type papers, and make copies of course materials while on campus."[51] For students at commuter schools such as CUNY, the importance of successfully locating places on campus for both social and scholarly work was heightened by their sometimes long commutes, which restricted student flexibility for choosing where to accomplish their schoolwork. To better accommodate more students within the bounds of the campus, it is worthwhile to consider how best to ensure that the library is an inviting location in which students can successfully accomplish their academic work.

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