

Information Seeking and Retrieval by Minority College

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Abstract:

The present research was carried out among a population of sixty first year B.A. students at a college in northern Israel who participated in a program of social academic integration of Arab speaking minority students, in 2005. The objective of the research was to investigate both the patterns and the difficulties of the participants in locating and retrieving information in order to write an academic paper. Three research tools were used:

- A. A guided inquiry used to identify difficulties and to map information search behaviors. The inquiry was based on the model: “Information Search Process” of Carol Collier Kuhlthau (1991) which describes six active stages of information seeking to prepare a paper: Initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and preparation.
- B. Statements on the dependency between “user” and “task”, “information” and “channels and sources of information” which were defined by Katrina Bystrom as central objects in information seeking and retrieval (1999). The statements are based on the theoretical model “Information Seeking and Retrieval” (Bystrom & Jarvelin, 1995).
- C. Pearson chi-square statistical tests carried out on quotes by participants using an SPSS program, to explain the findings which were raised by the previous two tools.

The findings of the research indicate that the fourth stage in the preparation of a paper, the formulation stage, is the most difficult for the participants among the various tasks. According to the Kuhlthau model, at this stage, it was to be expected that the pressure felt at the previous stage would be replaced by a sense of confidence, but the participants described feeling fear, time pressure and feelings of deprivation which was specific to them. No specific difficulties were found at the thought level; the difficulties was specific to the participants at the level of action and at the emotional level, as, for example, the language barrier accompanied by a sense of knowledge anxiety, interpersonal communication of an

