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NEWSPAPER TREATMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: THE CHANGING USE OF PREFERRED AND NON-PREFERRED TERMS IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES* AND *OMAHA WORLD-HERALD*

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NEWSPAPER TREATMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: THE CHANGING USE OF PREFERRED AND NON-PREFERRED TERMS IN *THE NEW YORK TIMES* AND *OMAHA WORLD-HERALD*

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University of Nebraska, 2000

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The purpose of this study was to examine whether the print media use preferred terminology when portraying people with disabilities. This was performed through an examination of content from the 1909, 1939, 1969 and 1999 *New York Times* and 1969 and 1999 *Omaha World-Herald* articles. A sample of twenty news stories about people with disabilities was chosen from the 1909 and 1939 *New York Times* and from the 1969 *New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald.* Forty articles were chosen from the 1999 *New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald.*

A content analysis was conducted to determine if disability-related news stories include more non-preferred than preferred terminology and if more recent disability-related news stories include more preferred terminology than earlier news stories. The articles were coded for: 1) the disability covered, 2) the focus given the disability, 3) type of article (i.e., news, feature and other), 4) topic of article (i.e., budget/expenditure,

government policy, normalization/ integration, integration in schools, housing/ accommodation) and 5) non-preferred and preferred terminology used in the article. An article was examined for the presence of preferred and non-preferred terms taken from two sets of guidelines from the National Easter Seals Society and Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Overall, the 1909 and 1939 *New York Times* articles showed that more non-preferred terminology was used, but in the 1969 and 1999 *New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald* articles more preferred terminology was used. Of the 160 articles coded, 53% included preferred terminology. In analyzing the 1969 and 1999 *New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald* articles, 76% included preferred terminology.

The overall findings disagree with previous research that indicates the print media use non-preferred terminology when portraying people with disabilities, but the prediction that more recent disability-related news stories include more preferred terminology was supported. The study also shows that what is called non-preferred terminology by the National Easter Seals Society and Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services Guidelines is not always considered non-preferred by the newspaper stylebooks and that journalists are not adhering to all of the newspaper guidelines. The author calls for journalists to be more sensitive to these guidelines when portraying people with disabilities and also for communication between human service organizations and newspapers to form a consistency between guidelines.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Portraying People with Disabilities

My interest in the portrayal of people with disabilities in the print media originated when I was employed at an Omaha-based, non-profit organization that serves people with developmental disabilities. My experience in working in the human services field led me to observe that people, including the media, do not consistently use preferred terminology when talking and writing about people with disabilities. By preferred terminology, I am speaking of the terminology preferred by the human service organizations. As community relations manager, I worked with the media in placing news stories about people with disabilities. Human service organizations have developed guidelines for preferred terms, so I provided the media with such terms, and in most instances they didn't use the terminology given to them. It was a policy of the human services organization to use the term "developmentally disabled." The media substituted "retarded" for developmentally disabled.

In examining whether the print media use non-preferred or preferred terminology, there are two questions that need to be addressed: Do newspapers portray people with disabilities in non-preferred terms? Has the use of preferred terms increased over time?

This thesis examines the print media's coverage of people with disabilities to determine if the print media uses more non-preferred or preferred terminology in news stories portraying people with disabilities.

Literature Review

In the past, it was apparent that the media portrayed people with disabilities using language that sometimes offended them and disturbed support organizations. Efforts were made to encourage the use of less objectionable terms preferred by the media's critics. They were concerned that non-preferred usage planted stereotypes in readers' minds.

Many scholars[1] agree that society is strongly influenced by the media. Scholars also agree that media's stereotypes of people with disabilities are damaging to the perceptions of people with disabilities (Elliott and Byrd 348; Elliott 73) and that "the media portray persons with disabilities in a negative and unrealistic way, preferring the sensational or pitiful to the everyday and human side of disability," (de Balcazar, Bradford and Fawcett 34).

According to Bogdan, Biklen, Shapiro and Spelkoman,

> The media present people with disabilities in a variety of stereotypical ways, as objects of pity and as objects of humor and ridicule – but one favorite image is the disabled person as dangerous (32).
>
> Of course, the notion of the disabled as dangerous is false. Rather than being perpetrators of violence, they have, throughout history been its recipients (35).

In the early 1900s, highly derogatory labels, such as idiot, imbecile, moron, feebleminded, dumb, defective and mentally retarded were being used for people with disabilities (Bogdan and Biklen 16; Macklin and Gaylin xix; Trent 5). Examples of the

[1] Gardner and Radel (269); Yoshida, Wasilewski and Friedman (419); Keller, Hallahan, McShane, Crowley and Blandford (271) and Catlett (1).

portrayal include "[...] idiot and imbecile through mentally deficient and mentally retarded to people with mental retardation and intellectual disability," Hastings (363). According to Monson and Shurtleff, "People with disabilities were often thought to be cursed in some way and not fit to live in society" (163).

Yoshida et al. notes, "Persons with disabilities were typically portrayed as menaces to society, or persons to be pitied because they were helpless" (418).

According to Trent,

> At various points in their history, these nouns began to be qualified: defectives became mental defectives, imbeciles became high-grade and low-grade imbeciles, and morons became the higher functioning mentally retarded. More recently the mentally retarded have become mental retarded persons and now persons with mental retardation and, in some circles, persons with developmental disabilities or persons specially challenged (5).

Although these changes have taken place, many researchers agree that the language used by the media is generally more negative than positive.

Studies of Media Use of Non-Preferred Language

Several studies examine newspapers and the language used when writing about people with disabilities. The studies concur that the language is inappropriate and unrealistic. For example, in a study performed by Keller et al. (277), words such as "tragedy," "prisoner of his/her body," "minds locked by nature," "suffers" and "insurmountable obstacles" were found in the newspapers analyzed.

Keller et al. (275) also found that the references to people with disabilities tended to occur in feature or "soft news" rather than "hard news" and "to be about individuals with physical disabilities, mental retardation, or individuals identified by the

generic labels 'handicapped' and 'disabled.'" There was little mention made of the impact of the disability on a person's life or of the possibility for improvement of a person's condition. When there was mention of the impact of the disability on the person's life, it often portrayed the negative impact of the disability.

According to a study by Gardner *et al.* (270), which looked at four daily and two Sunday newspapers, a person with disabilities is likely to be portrayed in the media as a dependent person requiring special services and support from the community. This image could be expected to reinforce stereotypes of the disabled person as someone who is not capable of effectively managing his/her own affairs and someone who needs to be helped and perhaps even pitied.

In Catlett's study (2), which reviewed 227 articles from the 1989 and 1990 *Houston Post* and *Los Angeles Times*, the results reveal that people with disabilities rarely are represented realistically compared to persons with a range of characteristics. Rather, they are most often portrayed through the media as having super or heroic powers or deserving of pity. "Media write inspirational 'stories,' in the belief that they are advocating for people with disabilities, when in fact they place unrealistic expectations on many of them."

Johnson (106) states, "For the press, disabled persons are either tragic, hopeless cases constantly bemoaning their fate or incredibly courageous and inspiring. For this reason, persons with disabilities are almost invariably described as 'overcoming' their disabilities or are 'afflicted by' or 'suffering from' them." Johnson also noted that features involving people with disabilities that do appear in the media emphasize – and

thus perpetuate – the "heroic cripple" or the "pathetic cripple" stereotype. Johnson, editor of the *Disability Rag*, which is concerned with the way journalists depict persons with disabilities, said, "Making journalists sensitive to these concerns is an uphill battle." She notes that the latest edition of *The Associated Press Stylebook* forbids the use of the term "wheelchair-bound," yet Johnson says that she has a pile of articles, written since the stylebook was created, which use those words.

According to Johnson (27), a survey on disability terminology in the July-August 1987 issue of *The Disability Rag* asked readers to comment on a list of common words used to describe disabled people. In addition to the standard designations handicapped and disabled, the publication asked for comments on the terms wheelchair bound and victim. Comments also were gathered on the terms crippled, differently abled, handi-capable, physically challenged and person with a disability.

Johnston states,

> Responses were remarkably consistent, perhaps signaling that a common language and culture was starting to emerge within the disability rights movement, which much of the general public was unaware of. Responses gave a picture of a community almost on the point of consensus on terminology – but in a way far different than outsiders might assume.
>
> Few who responded liked handicapped, though they agreed it was not too offensive – certainly not as bad as the euphemism handi-capable [. . .] they rejected it and chose instead a heretofore medical term – disabled – using the somewhat tortuous reasoning that disabled may be what they were considered clinically, but this term, at least, unlike handicapped, did not mark them as people who could not function in society (27).

Edwards notes,

> The stories about the social extremes – superwomen or supercrips – were only momentarily fashionable, and it can be argued they fit the 'uniqueness' criteria of news judgment and were good journalism. Perhaps. If these stories were good journalism, then they have been done enough and it is time to move disability stories and stories by disabled reporters into the mainstream of society (111).

Edwards (111) would like stories written about people with disabilities judged in the same way as city councils, local political races and school boards.

Edwards (111) agrees with other scholars when he says there is no extensive research on disability issues, other than a count of the "supercrip, sadcrip" stories. He cited a piece of research by the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on the Status of Disabled Persons. The research noted, "The coverage of disabled persons and of issues concerning disability was relatively slight. On average, there were fewer than one item per issue in most papers." The coverage presented focused on "local services rather than on government policies and that disability-related issues are not high on the public policy agenda." The research concluded that most coverage was related to fundraising and charitable events and accomplishments of disabled athletes.

Clogston (46) breaks down coverage about people with disabilities into two models.

> Disability coverage can be divided into two distinct types: traditional models, which focus on the disabled individual's differences from others in society, and the progressive viewpoint, which focuses more on how society deals with a population that includes those with various disabilities (46).

The traditional viewpoint portrays people with disabilities as being medically and economically dysfunctional. They are to be cared for by society, or they will be looked upon in awe as "supercrips" when they perform day-to-day tasks despite their disabilities.

The progressive approach consists of looking at the dysfunction as resting not within the individual with the disability but in society's inability or unwillingness to adapt its physical, social and occupational environments to accommodate all of its members (Clogston 46).

Clogston's (46) 1991 study of disability coverage in 16 notable and high-circulation daily newspapers during the first three months of 1990 provided a look at how some of the most reputable newspapers covered the topic. The study examined 363 articles about physical disability written by staff reporters at the newspapers and evaluated them in terms of language used, issues covered, and portrayal of individuals with disabilities.

> With language, the case can be made for avoiding any use of traditional terminology to refer to individuals with disabilities, as has been done with women and minorities. But lack of consensus among those with disabilities themselves on what constitutes acceptable language makes reliance on rigid guidelines risky. Making journalists aware of the issues and ensuring that they avoid using some of the more offensive terms may be the most that can be hoped for in terms of making newspaper language more progressive.
>
> Newspapers should make an effort to include all aspects of disability coverage in style guidelines and to ensure that reports are aware of those guidelines. Since presence of style guidelines on covering disability was associated with traditional issue coverage, it might be desirable for those guidelines to go beyond the do's and don'ts of language and to include a discussion on

> what disability issues and roles are considered to be traditional or stereotypical and what are progressive.
>
> It is unlikely and undesirable that guidelines would impede coverage of breaking stories that deal with the traditional aspects of disability. But reporters who are more aware of the progressive issues and roles might be more likely to include them in nonbreaking stories that might otherwise not include the impact of an event or issue on those with disabilities (50).

Bilken believes,

> Besides specific, conscious content relevant to a story (e.g., a person's age, the level of a person's disability, the ethical questions being raised), the media determine a story's tone (e.g., exciting, a drama, a tragedy, a contest, or entertainment). And usually, news writers have more or less 'stock' ways of presenting a particular issue. Disability, for example, is typically cast in terms of tragedy, of charity and its attendant emotion, pity, or of struggle and accomplishment. When reporters approach any story, they bring with them one of a combination of such standard 'frames' for presenting it to the readers (46).

Bilken (46) cites an example that Kenneth Jernigan, president of the National Federation of the Blind, used in the mid-1970s. He was writing on the "difficulty of moving the media beyond its stereotypic 'frame' of people with disabilities. He recounted an incident in which a reporter at a political action convention chose to write from a traditional, debilitating 'frame' rather than focus on the issues of discrimination, civil rights, and political organizing that were the meat of the conference:

> A reporter...came to one of our meetings and said, 'I'd like to get pictures of blind persons bowling and of some of the members with their dogs.' I tried to explain to him that such a story would be a distortion – that we were there to discuss refusal by employers to let us work, refusal by airlines to let us to ride, refusal by hotels to let us stay, refusal by society to let us in, and refusal by social service agencies to let us out. He said he was glad I had told him and that it had been very helpful and enlightening. Then he added, 'Now, could I see the dogs and the bowlers? I am in quite a rush!'

> Deep down (at the gut level) they (the public and the media) regard us as inferior, incompetent, unable to lead an everyday life of job and sorrow, and necessarily less fortunate than they. In the past we have tended to see ourselves as others have seen us...But no more! That day is at an end.
>
> We have not (in the present day parlance) been perceived as minority. Yet, that is exactly what we are – a minority, with all that the term implies (46).

Bilken notes,

> When journalism transforms an issue or event into a story, the reported account is not the 'real' event as perceived by the participants, but is journalism's rendition or interpretation of the event. Journalism's account almost certainly cannot be a neutral or objective presentation (46-47).

To understand this, Bilken (47) urges examination of print media's limitations – for example, the limited number of reporters newspapers employ and the unlimited numbers and types of stories. Because reporters must cover a plethora of different issues, they cannot achieve expertise in all or even a few of them. Reporters must meet urgent deadlines and cannot develop a story with much depth – they neither have the time nor space for that. "They live by the principle, 'keep it simple.'"

Bodgan and Bilken, (16), refer to "handicapism" many times in their article. To them, handicapism is a way of culture and is manifested in prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. Handicapism is portrayed in many ways, including the images of the handicapped in the media.

"Often newspaper articles link crimes with various disabilities as if the disability was the cause of the crime," notes Bodgan and Bilken (16). They cited this example: The *Associated Press* published a news release that was wired across the country about

a murderer who was scheduled to be executed. The news release referred to the man as "an alcoholic and mentally incompetent psychotic who was mentally retarded."

In Krossel's article (46-47), he cites several instances where people with disabilities have set out to do something courageous, most often trying to raise money for their respective causes. One example was Rick Hansen's two-year trip around the world in a wheelchair in 1985. His trip received attention because he embarked on this adventure to circle the globe in a wheelchair after having been seriously injured in an automobile accident.

"Individuals with disabilities...have, at times, been highly critical of how the press covers such events, and also the manner in which journalists handle stories dealing with the subject of disability in general," cites Krossel (46).

According to Krossel (46), Peter Kavanagh, a journalist with a disability, told a group of journalism students from Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnical Institute that reporters had simply abandoned their normal skepticism in their coverage of the Hansen story:

> All the standards are gone with Rick Hansen. [The coverage] is gushing. It's adoration. It's 'Gee, you look good. How's it going? You're doing a wonderful thing.' In one sense, that's crap. That's the job of the p.r. person or promoter. That's not the job of a journalist. The journalist is not there to give his seal of approval. That journalist is there to tell a story.

Krossel notes, "The media have a hard time seeing disabled people as people" (46).

In Gartner and Joe's opinion, "[. . .] the particular – the disability – comes to be seen as the whole person, namely, the crippled child, the blind man, the deaf woman" (205).

Zola believes,

> the use of disability as a metaphor in the media can have substantial effects on public attitudes, impressions and prejudices [. . .]. While metaphors are not meant to convey real people and their issues, the ordinary reader obviously translates some of this to real life (5).

Zola cites several examples of using disabilities as metaphors including themes of menacing and loathing, the "super crip," and, most often, "victims."

"Contemporary usage [. . .] reinforces this in the supposedly neutral language of medicine where we are 'patients,' 'victims of polio,' and 'sufferers of heart disease'" (Zola 5).

People with Disabilities Compared to Minority Groups

People with disabilities also were compared to other minority groups. According to Elliott,

> People with disabilities are presented in ways that are just as offensive and destructive as the ways that women and minority groups were presented by media more than a quarter of a century ago.
>
> People with disabilities are presented as the stuff from which nightmares are made. They are offered as oddities and symbols of fear by which 'normal' people can know their own worth (73).

Elliott (74) states that offensive portrayals of people with disabilities are an ethical problem for the media. Portrayals that result in harm to individuals need to be justified, but it is not surprising that media managers would have a difficult time understanding that people with disabilities are harmed by negative portrayals when some of the major offenders are the public service groups with public service announcements. (Examples: poster children, warnings that people who use drugs can

end up disabled – a fate worse than death). If these groups become more sensitive to such references, then the media might also. Elliott compares this sensitivity with the fact that for decades some minorities and women didn't realize that they were being exploited.

According to Burd (2), persons with disabilities see the media as tools to change the society and the way others view them. They have attempted to bring about this transformation by changing old stereotypes and developing alternative images to create new awareness and by utilizing media forms for the purpose of advocacy.

Burd's (3) study, which sampled stories in major city daily newspapers over a one-year period, showed that the "new minority" (persons with disabilities and the aged) are accumulating content on the "minority beat" in the areas of community development, economics, human and group relations, power and resources, education, transportation, recreation, environment and ecology.

Burd notes,

> As the new minorities gain access to the mass media, there remains relatively little research...and even less on media and the handicapped, except the obvious need for the blind and deaf and mute to develop their own communication for function and survival (5).

Although the majority of the scholars agree that the media portray persons with disabilities in a negative manner, there is one study that disagrees with that claim.

Burnett and Paul state,

> People in general have become more accepting of disabled individuals primarily through increased familiarity as the number of people with disabilities has grown [. . .]. A reason for the greater acceptance of the disabled is the improved portrayal of

> disabled individuals in the media. Television programs, advertisements, movies, and news programs no longer stigmatize the disabled. Current portrayals convey inspiration, not limitation...Still our tolerance of the severely disabled remains superficial (48-49).

Guidelines: Non-preferred vs. Preferred Terminology

Several sets of guidelines suggesting language to be used when speaking and writing about people with disabilities have been developed. Human service organizations, which advocate for people with disabilities, push for the use of more positive and realistic terminology when referring to such people. An example of this advocacy is the *National Easter Seals Society Guidelines*, "Portraying persons with disabilities in print," developed in 1980. These guidelines emphasize the uniqueness and worth of all persons rather than differences, keep the individual in perspective, and show the individual with a disability doing something independently. They also show persons with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, depict the typical achiever as well as the superachiever, emphasize consistency, and, avoid terms carrying negative connotations (i.e., "Cripple/crippled/the crippled – Say the person with a disability/individual with a disability caused by or resulting from/persons with disabilities.") Examples of terminology used more in the past to describe people with disabilities include cripple, feeble-minded, idiot, imbecile, stupid, wheelchair-bound, deaf and dumb, deformed and victim, just to name a few. With the help of human service organizations, terms more acceptable to them and their clients have evolved as alternatives to objectionable terms.

The National Easter Seals Society developed the following guidelines as part of the Society's observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

1. Out of respect for the uniqueness and worth of the whole individual and because a disabled condition may or may not be handicapping, use the word disability rather than the word handicap, but give reference to the person first.

2. Because the person is not the condition, reference to the person in teams of the condition he or she has is inaccurate as well as demeaning.

3. Some categorical terms are used correctly only when communicating technical information – for example, hard of hearing, deaf, partially sighted, and blind.

4. Avoid all terms carrying negative or judgmental connotations and replace them with objective descriptors. Some examples include:
   - Afflicted by/Afflicted with – Say the person *has.*
   - Cripple/Crippled/The Cripple – Say the person *with a disability/individual with a disability caused by or resulting from/persons with disabilities.*
     Drain/Burden – *Say condition requiring increased or additional responsibility/person whose condition requires intensive or additional care or adjustment.*
   - Homebound – Say person *whose ability to leave the home is limited.*
   - Homebound employment – Say *employment in the home.*
   - Inflicted – Say *caused by.*
   - Invalid (literally, not valid) – Say the person who *has a disability resulting from or caused by.*
   - Lame – Say person *with an orthopedic disability.*
   - Restricted to/Confined to – Say *uses a wheelchair/walks with crutches.*
   - Victim – Say person *who has/person who experienced/person with.*
   - Wheelchair Bound – Say *uses a wheelchair.*
   - Unfortunate, pitiful, poor, and other such words carrying value judgments; deaf and dumb, blind as a bat, crip, freak, deformed, and other such clichés and terms that stereotype, disparage, or offend - *No replacements.*

5. Be careful with certain words that, if used incorrectly, can reinforce negative misconceptions of persons who have disabilities.

In 1994, the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services (61) created a guide for journalists and the public to use when interacting with people with disabilities – people with speech impairments, the deaf or hard of hearing, people with visual impairments, people in wheelchairs or on crutches and people with cognitive disabilities. The Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services also printed a list of outdated expressions and recommended alternatives:

OBJECTIONABLE	PREFERRED
afflicted	has
birth defects	disabled since birth, born with
cerebral-palsied	has cerebral palsy
cripple, crip....	walks with the aid of crutches
deaf mute	deaf and speech impaired
defective	impaired
deformed	has a physical disability
dummy	pre-lingually deaf
Elephant Man's disease	neurofibromatosis
emotionally disturbed	behavior disordered
epileptic	has epilepsy
former mental patient	mentally restored
handicapped	disabled, disability
handicapped accessible	accessible to people with disabilities, fully accessible
hearing impaired	deaf or hard of hearing
hunchbacked	has a spinal curvature
insane, deranged, deviant	has a mental impairment
lame	walks with a limp, uses crutches
midget, dwarf	short-statured or little person
Mongoloid idiot	Down syndrome
normal	nondisabled, ablebodied
paralytic, arthritic	is paralyzed, as arthritis
retarded	cognitive disability, developmentally disabled

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) Disabilities Committee also created a handbook titled "Reporting on People with Disabilities" in 1990. Tom Grein, a Washington editor who has polio, volunteered to write the first draft.

"Part of the confusion stems from the fact that groups representing people with disabilities do not always agree on terms. For instance, there still is no firm consensus regarding the terms 'handicapped' and 'disabled.'" (Grein, Breisky and Disabilities Committee, pullout section).

"One task of the ASNE's Disabilities Committee is to seek some answers to this confusion, to develop a list of recognized terms to describe disabilities, and to point out some pitfalls." This is a compilation of the preferences of the dozens of groups that represent Americans with disabilities, broadened by the committee's collective judgment. (Grein, Breisky and Disabilities Committee, pullout section).

The handbook included a collection of reporting techniques and a long glossary ranging from AFFLICTED ('Connotes pain and suffering; most people with disabilities do not suffer from chronic pain') to WHEELCHAIR ('Do not say that a person is confined to a wheelchair or is wheelchair-bound...Wheelchairs help with mobility; they do not imprison people') (Breisky 84-85).

Information from the booklet came from many sources including Challenge International, The League of Human Dignity, United Cerebral Palsy, The Quill, National Easter Seal Society, The Research and Training Center on Independent Living and Gallaudet University. A complete glossary of terms can be found in Appendix B.

Also reviewed were the stylebooks from *The Associated Press*, *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald.*

According to Norm Goldstein, *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* Editor, the 1977 version was the first of the stylebook in its current format, with the alphabetical listings.

Goldstein said,

> The 1977 edition of the *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* did not have a specific entry for disabled or handicapped. There was an entry on deaf-mute, which said: 'This term may be used, but the preferred form is to say that an individual cannot hear or speak. A mute person may be deaf or may be able to hear. Do not use deaf and dumb.' The 'deaf-mute' entry was revised in 1990 to recommend avoiding the term altogether.
>
> The first substantial entry seems to have appeared in the 1986 edition, under 'handicapped,' 'disabled,' 'impaired.' It included 'disabled,' handicap,' 'blind,' 'deaf,' 'mute,' and 'wheelchair-bound.' In the 1996 edition, some of these specific guidelines were rephrased and the entry was listed under 'disabled, handicapped, impaired.' That is the current entry as well.

The references to people with disabilities in the 1996 and 1999 *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* are the same. Below is the excerpt from these editions.

> **Disabled, handicapped, impaired** in general do not describe an individual as *disabled* or *handicapped* unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. If such a description must be used, make it clear what the handicap is and how much the person'' physical or mental performance is affected.
>
> Some terms include:
>
> *disabled* A general term used for a physical or cognitive condition that substantially limits one or more of the major daily life activities.
>
> *handicap* It should be avoided in describing a disability.
>
> *blind* Describes a person with complete loss of sight. For others use terms such as *visually impaired* or *person with low vision.*

> *deaf* Describes a person with total hearing loss. For others use partial hearing loss. For other use *partial hearing loss* or *partially deaf.* Avoid using *deaf-mute.* Do not use *deaf and dumb.*
>
> *mute* Describes a person who physically cannot speak. Others with speaking difficulties are *speech impaired.*
>
> *wheelchair-user* People use wheelchairs for independent mobility. Do not use confined mobility. Do not use *confined to a wheelchair*, or *wheelchair-bound.* If a wheelchair is needed, say why (74).

The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage also was reviewed.

"Our most recent stylebook, before the 1999 edition, was *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*, published in 1976 by the Times Books division of Random House," wrote Allan Siegal, assistant managing editor of *The New York Times*, in a letter to the author.

The 1976 edition includes guidelines for only two terms relating to people with disabilities. Included are:

Insane asylum. It has an ugly ring, and should be avoided except in direct quotations and certain historical contexts. Mental hospital is preferred.

Deaf and dumb, deaf-mute. Avoid these phrases. They are not precise, and they have cruel overtones. There are other ways of saying that a person cannot hear and speak.

The 1999 edition contains the terms disability or disabled, cripple or crippled, afflicted, handicapped, challenged, impaired, deformed, blind, deaf, stricken, victim, AIDS advocate and AIDS victim. The entire entry can be found in Appendix B.

Lastly, the *Omaha World-Herald* guidelines were researched.

According to Herb Probasco, copy editor at the *Omaha World-Herald* from 1971 to 1998, the newspaper used *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.* In regards to the language used for people with disabilities, he does not remember disagreeing with the Associated Press on the style.

Jeff Gauger, *Omaha World-Herald* Assistant Managing Editor, said, "The language used in the *Omaha World-Herald* reflects the social mores of the time."

According to Deanna Sands, managing editor at the *Omaha World-Herald*, "The *Omaha World-Herald* style did not change specifically because of the ADA but because of the way society goes." The change in the *Omaha World-Herald* style is an evolution. As society goes, the *Omaha World-Herald* goes with it.

"The *Omaha World-Herald* used to be more different from Associated Press. Over the past 25 years, we have grown toward the Associated Press style. We don't refer to a disability of any sort unless it is relevant to the story," states Sands.

Carl Keith, *Omaha World-Herald* Managing Editor from 1960 to 1999, recalled that both the Associated Press and United Press came out with stylebooks in the 1960s and, they were both used as reference material for the *Omaha World-Herald.*

Keith explained,

> Sometime after that, Fred Ware created a thin stylebook, which included general terminology relating to Omaha.
>
> After Fred Ware retired, in approximately 1968, he spent a year at *the Omaha World-Herald* rewriting a second stylebook. Publisher Harold Anderson put the stylebook on the shelf and said to use the *Associated Press Stylebook.*
>
> *Omaha World-Herald's* operation and style were more with an industry standard -- not unique but a parochial style. Through the years, it has evaporated. More and more an industry standard including color, size of art and stylebook.

According to Keith, several people with disabilities worked on the paper. "Maybe the presence of people with disabilities had an impact," Keith said. "They had a more realistic view. One person with disabilities was the copy editor. People admired him. If any question came up, he probably would have been consulted."

Civil Rights Movement and the Americans with Disabilities Act

It is important to consider the role of civil rights movements that have taken place during the past 40 years.

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act passed, according to Shapiro,

> after years of press coverage of events that stirred the conscience of a guilty nation to its history of separatism and racism. The law was preceded by images of courageous Freedom Riders, marches, bus boycotts, lynchings, church bombings, peaceful protesters [. . .]. The disability rights movement is not powered by such compelling imagery. But if the news coverage of the toilets holds true, disabled people may be burdened by an image of being selfish pests, even if they are asserting rights they already own (Policy 126).

In referring to the "toilets," he was speaking about New York City's plan to set up outdoor toilets. The city officials hadn't thought about making the toilets wheelchair accessible. When people with disabilities reasonably demanded the toilets be wheelchair accessible, Shapiro notes,

> they were depicted in the press as a selfish minority with dubious claims [. . .]. Press coverage of the controversy painted the dissenters as demanding a narrow right that would benefit just a small number of wheelchair users over a common good that would benefit the vast majority of the New Yorkers (Disability Rights 61).

The opposition to separate the toilets threatened the entire project.

On July 26, 1990, President George Bush signed into law the American Disabilities Act (ADA). The primary reason for the passing of the ADA was the fact that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not include persons with disabilities. Essentially, the ADA gives disabled individuals civil-rights protection and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, or religion (Burnett and Paul 48).

The ADA was passed with little attention from the media, less than what has accompanied other civil rights bills. The reason is that journalists have been too slow to comprehend the civil rights of disabled Americans (Shapiro, Disability Rights 59).

While reporting at times describes the rights activism of disabled people, Shapiro, (Disability Policy 127-128; Disability Rights 63) suggests a strange phenomenon is on the rise in the passing of the ADA:

> Some reporters now combine traditional stereotypes with the new talk of rights. The result is a peculiar hybrid, the "militant Tiny Tim" story. These are stories in which reporters tell a civil rights story, but use the negative imagery of Tiny Tims and super-crips, or they tell one of these traditional stories but dress it up with a little civil rights language.

Shapiro (Disability Policy 128; Disability Rights 64) cites an article that appeared in the *Washington Post* about 27 year-old Jenny Langley, a quadriplegic who uses a ventilator as a result of an automobile accident. She was leaving an Atlanta rehabilitation center but needed accessible housing and personal assistance service or else faced being forced into an out-of-state nursing home. Langley's dilemma was a civil rights one – a society that fails to provide for the basic needs of people who live with severe disabilities. However, the story, by freelance writer Remar Sutton, was done using the "overcome" model.

"First, you notice how pretty she is; then you think how nifty the bow tie around her neck is. And then you notice it's not a bow tie but the dressing around the hole in her throat," the reporter noted. He then explains how Langley needs help with quad coughs, described as undignified treatment in which someone pounds on her chest several times a day. "If you're Jenny, you say thank you every time it's done," Sutton wrote.

Shapiro (Disability Policy 129; Disability Rights 65) goes on to say that along with the hybrid stories is another new type of story -- the backlash story, which looks for claims for rights but finds them wanting. An example of this is a story from the September 21, 1991 issue of the *Baltimore Sun* that played up the fears of restaurant owners and others confused about their responsibilities in making restaurants accessible. "The focus was on such concerns as the costs of providing access, and the possibility of wheelchairs being in the way of waitresses or customers, or even of some diners being made uncomfortable by the sight of someone who was 'different' at another table."

Statement of Purpose

The previous research showed that newspapers portray people with disabilities using non-preferred terminology, thus planting stereotypes into their readers' minds. It is useful to continue this research, focusing on two questions: Do newspapers continue to portray people with disabilities in non-preferred terms? Does the use of preferred terms increase over time?

This study will test the following hypotheses and answer several research questions.

Hypothesis 1: Disability-related news stories will include more non-preferred than preferred terminology.

Hypothesis 2: More recent disability-related news stories will include more preferred terminology than will earlier news stories.

Both hypotheses will be tested by examining relevant news stories in *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald*, with details described in the methodology section to follow.

Related research questions will include:

1. In what ways will coverage of persons with disabilities change over the years?
2. How well do the newspapers meet their own policy standards?
3. What topic categories will be covered more than others?
4. Will more articles about people with disabilities be news or feature stories?
5. Will the news stories give major or minor attention to the disability?

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology: An Investigation of *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald*

Content analysis is the research method chosen for this study, which will be partially modeled after studies conducted in "The Coverage of Persons with Disabilities in American Newspapers" by Clayton E. Keller, Daniel P. Hallahan, Edward A. McShane, E. P. Crowley and Barbara J. Blandford and "National, Metropolitan and Local Newsprint Coverage of Developmental Disability" by Mark Carter, Trevor R. Parmenter and Michelle Wetters.[2]

Data Analysis

Two daily newspapers, a local and a national newspaper, were examined for the purpose of this study. The sampling was drawn from *The New York Times* and the *Omaha World-Herald,* including *The New York Times* for its status as the newspaper of record and a standard of excellence, and the *Omaha World-Herald* because it represents the community where the study is being conducted and provided the researcher's primary experience with media use of the focal terminology.

The investigator reviewed *The New York Times Index* for the years 1909, 1939, 1969 and 1999 to find stories about people with disabilities. A list of subject titles were

[2] Both studies included a content analysis of newspapers and how they portray people with disabilities. For more details about the studies, see Keller, Clayton E.; Hallahan, Daniel P.; McShane, Edward A.; Crowley, E. P.; and Blandford, Barbara. J., "The Coverage of Persons with Disabilities in American Newspapers," 271-282 and Carter, Mark; Parmenter, Trevor, R.; and Wetters, Michelle, "National, Metropolitan and Local Newsprint Coverage of Developmental Disability," 173-199.

compiled and used as the sequence and guide to review the article descriptions in the newspaper index. The following categories were used: Americans with Disabilities Act, birth defects, blind, Cerebral Palsy, cripple, deaf, deaf-mute, developmentally disabled, disability, Down Syndrome, dumb, Easter Seals, Epilepsy, feebleminded, handicapped, idiot, imbecile, mental deficiency, mental retardation, Mongoloid, physical retardation, Special Olympics and stupid. In reviewing *The New York Times Index* for categories relating to people with disabilities, there were instances when categories made referrals to other categories including crime, education, immigrants, infantile paralysis, medicine and wheelchair races.

The study also will examine the *Omaha World-Herald* during the years of 1969 and 1999. Because the 1969 *Omaha World-Herald* editions are neither indexed nor can be researched via computer, other means were found. The *Omaha World-Herald* LibraryLink has 1969 issues indexed on microfiche for internal purposes only and are not available for the public's use. The investigator notified the research specialist at the *Omaha World-Herald* to research articles from 1969. Given the criteria used previously (articles at least eight inches in length and from the given categories), the researcher found twenty articles and provided photocopies of these articles to the investigator. Articles from the 1999 *Omaha World-Herald* were located through a search of the LEXIS-NEXIS computer database in the University of Nebraska at Omaha Library. The categories listed above also were utilized for this portion of the study.

Content analysis, which is "the earliest, most central and most widely-practiced method of analysis," is defined as "a research technique for the objective, systematic

and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication," according to McQuail (183). Manifest content is the visible surface content (Babbie 312), which in this study, would be *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald* news stories.

The basic approach for applying the technique is to choose a sample of content; establish a category frame relevant to the purpose of the inquiry; choose a unit of analysis; match content category frame by counting the frequency of the references to items in the category frame, per chosen unit of content; and express the result as an overall distribution of the total sample in terms of the frequency of occurrence (McQuail 183).

Data Gathering

The author, who served as the primary evaluator, will code the articles from *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald,* hereafter identified as *Times* and *Herald* in subsequent mentions after first reference in each chapter.

The news content, excluding editorials, sports, entertainment and advertising were reviewed. Articles less than eight inches long were excluded. Of those articles longer than eight inches, twenty were randomly selected from 1909, 1939 and 1969 issues of the *Times* while forty articles were selected from 1999. From the *Herald,* twenty articles were selected from 1969 issues and forty articles from 1999 issues. A total of one hundred stories were selected from the *Times*, and sixty were selected from the *Herald.* When twenty articles at least eight inches in length were not found in the 1909 *Times,* the criterion was changed to a five-inch minimum.

The two hypotheses were broken down into comparisons of the *Times* and *Herald*. Comparisons included the *Times* stories over time, the 1969 and 1999 *Herald* stories and stories from both the *Times* and *Herald*.

A coding guide was created for the study (Appendix A). The information for each article was collected on a note card to alleviate any cumbersome coding sheets. The cards were tallied for the results.

Portions of the Keller, *et al.*, and Carter, Parmenter and Wetters studies were used as models for this research.

Keller, et al. (273), considered two major areas. The first area is descriptive information relating to the type of disability covered. Types of disabilities included were mental retardation, learning disability, speech and language disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability, behavior disorder, the general terms of handicapped or disabled and other. A disability category was assigned to each article. After gathering some of the 1909 articles, it was evident that the category mental illness needed to be included in the list of types of disabilities. Behavior disorder will be defined as anxiety disorder, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, oppositional-defiant disorder and bipolar disorder. Mental illness included insanity, schizophrenia and dementia. A distinction between the two categories needed to be made. Also not included in the list of types of disabilities are aging-related disabilities (including senility and other conditions that onset with age). It is possible some articles included more than one disability type, but if one was predominate, the article was coded under that specific type.

Keller, et al. (273), also looked at whether the disability was a major focus or minor part of the article and the type of article (i.e., news, feature and other). Each article was reviewed and coded in regards to focus and type of article. For example: if the article is about the government mandating what system the blind should use to read, the article was coded as major for major focus and news for news article.

The portion of the Carter, Parmenter, and Watters' study (179) used here included their classification of subject matter. The scholars classified articles according to the subject matter they addressed and used the following topic categories: budget/expenditure, government policy, normalization/integration, integration in schools, housing/accommodation, employment, teaching/instruction (schools), post-school training or services, sports, medical advances, crime, technology (non-medical), fundraising and legal. Topics that could not be coded according to the predetermined categories were coded as "other." Each article will be labeled according to topic category. Several of the categories could be closely related to government policy. To avoid confusion, three changes have been made to the categories. The government policy category excluded articles relating to budget/expenditure and integration in schools, which have their own categories. Transportation was added to the list of categories. Although sports articles were not reviewed for this study, it was necessary to include sports in the topic categories (i.e., a feature article about a person with disabilities who participated in the Special Olympics).

Two sets of guidelines for non-preferred and preferred terminology were used while examining the *Times* and *Herald* articles referring to people with disabilities.

The guidelines developed by the National Easter Seals Society (284) and the guide for journalists created by the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services (60) were used in determining if the *Times* and *Herald* use non-preferred or preferred terminology. Each non-preferred and preferred term found in an article were counted once. The *National Easter Seals Society Guidelines* and Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services Guide was integrated in alphabetical order. Those categories that were duplicative were combined under the same heading.

Non-preferred and alternative pairings include (partial list):

Non-Preferred	**Preferred**
birth defects	say *disabled since birth, born with*
cerebral-palsied	say *has cerebral palsy*
cripple, crippled	say *walks with the aid of crutches or person with a disability/individual with a disability caused by or resulting from/persons with disabilities*
deaf mute	say *deaf and speech impaired*
defective	say *impaired*
deformed	say *has a physical disability*
hunchbacked	say *has a spinal curvature*
inflicted	say *caused by*
insane, deranged, deviant	say *has a mental impairment*

The complete list of non-preferred and preferred pairs is found in Appendix A.

This approach was chosen for several reasons. First, the National Easter Seals Society and Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services Guidelines were the only guidelines from organizations that advocate for people with disabilities found in the reviewed literature. Secondly, both of the guidelines, which consist of non-preferred and preferred pairings, was useful in determining if the print media use non-preferred or preferred terminology when writing news stories regarding people with disabilities. If a

news story contains non-preferred or preferred terminology that is not included on the list of guidelines, the terms were added to the bottom of the list.

CHAPTER THREE

Results: A Comparison of Non-Preferred and Preferred Terminology in *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald*

A total of 160 newspaper articles including one hundred articles from *The New York Times* and sixty articles from the *Omaha World-Herald* were examined for this study. Specifically from the *Times*, twenty articles were chosen randomly from 1909, 1939 and 1969 while forty were chosen from 1999. From the *Herald,* twenty articles were selected from 1969, and forty were selected from 1999. These articles were coded for the type of disability each story covered, the focus of the article, type of article, the topic of the article and non-preferred or preferred terminology appeared in the article. The coding guide is located in Appendix A. This chapter is organized by hypotheses and research questions.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 – Disability-related news coverage will include more non-preferred than preferred terminology.

Hypothesis 1 expected the majority of the terminology used regarding people with disabilities to include more non-preferred than preferred terminology. All 160 *Times* and *Herald* articles were used for this hypothesis.

1909 *The New York Times*

Of the thirty-nine terms recorded, 75% of the terms found in the 1909 *Times* were non-preferred, a total of twenty-seven terms compared to nine preferred terms.

Table 1 illustrates a breakdown of the number of non-preferred and preferred terminology used in the *Times* and *Herald* articles.

TABLE 1
Non-preferred and preferred terminology used in *The New York Times* and *Omaha World Herald.* (Each term was counted once per article, no matter how many times it was mentioned in one article.) A complete listing of non-preferred and preferred terminology can be found in Appendix A.

Terminology	**Number of Times/Percent**						
	The New York Times				***Omaha World-Herald***		**TOTAL**
	1909	**1939**	**1969**	**1999**	**1969**	**1999**	
Non-Preferred	27 (75%)	19 (58%)	23 (58%)	13 (20%)	21 (72%)	14 (30%)	117 (47%)
Preferred	9 (25%)	14 (42%)	17 (42%)	53 (80%)	8 (28%)	32 (70%)	133 (53%)

The most common disapproved term in 1909 was "insane," used seven times or more than a fourth of all non-preferred terms. Appearing three times each (over 11% of the total) were "feebleminded," "cripple," "unfortunate" and "afflicted." The following each received one mention: "confined to," "idiotic," "sufferer," "queerly," "deaf and dumb," "lunatic" and "maniac."

The following examples illustrate the non-preferred terminology used in 1909. Although these terms are considered non-preferred, some of these terms were the proper legal terms in the early 1900s. The terms used below, including "lunatic" and "criminally insane," aren't insensitivity by the newspaper but are society's accepted terms.

An August 1 article notes,

> [. . .]. Still another heated Bronxillians remarked prophetically that 'an institution had ruined Matteawan and should another institution be allowed to ruin Lawrence Park?' Thereby, by insinuation, classing the students of a school for the blind with the criminals at Sing Sing and the criminally insane at Matteawan.

Many of the 1909 articles mentioned the New York State Commission in Lunacy. These articles were regarding the Commission's selection of a location for a new asylum, and the people in these asylums were often referred to as "lunatics," thus, the reason for the New York State Commission in Lunacy. This language, although acceptable in the early 1900s, would not be acceptable today.

An April 1 news story said,

> It was learned yesterday that Gov. Hughes has given his approval to the selection by the State Lunacy Commission of a site near Greenville, L. I. in the immediate vicinity of the Wheatley Hills millionaire colony, for the proposed new lunatic asylum.

One July 25 article regarding visual impairment mentions terminology that would be non-preferred today, but was accepted at that time. The article said,

> [. . .] Blind babies will not die or become idiotic with proper care and training. Children who lose their sight soon after birth if they, live at all, almost invariably become imbecile. [. . .]
>
> Other provisions made then for the blind under eight were to be placed in institutions for the feeble-minded. In February 1904, a nursery and kindergarten for these unfortunates was open [. . .].

Only 25 percent of the terminology found were preferred. Appearing six times or 66% was "blind," two times or 22% was "infantile paralysis" and one time or 11% was "disabled."

An example of preferred terminology appears in a May 8 article, which states,

> In her speech Miss Holt referred to the fact that so much of the present blindness is entirely preventable, and told of the classes held at the society rooms to teach the sightless paying and interesting work. When it is impossible for any one to attend the school, a teacher, who is blind herself, goes around to the houses and tenements and gives the lessons there.

A March 21 news story notes,

> The children are conveyed to and from their homes in states two of which are provided by the Board of Education, and others by philanthropic institutions under whose auspices the work for disabled children was first taken up.

Many of the 1909 articles were two to three inches in length. Headlines from articles that were not randomly selected included "Sanity Increase Doubles in a Year," "To Control Deaf-mute Home," "Practical Help to Cripples," "Miss Kellar Favors Braille" and "King Knights Blind Man."

1939 *The New York Times*

Of the thirty-three terms recorded, 58% of the terms found in the 1939 *Times* were non-preferred, a total of nineteen terms compared to fourteen preferred terms.

The most common non-preferred terms in 1939 were "cripple" used five times or 26%, "defective" used four times or 21% and "afflicted" and "handicapped" used three times or 15.8%. Appearing one time each (over 5% total) were "epileptic," "homebound," "retarded" and "victim."

There was one 1939 article that differed from most of the others. The author, Mrs. Alice Fitz Gerald, in an August 27 feature story, wrote about boys and girls on crutches, or with legs in braces and said "these children are children first, and cripples last.... To pity them to the extent of overindulgence or overprotection is to do them a

grave injury." While the quote above uses non-preferred terminology, it has a message that would be considered progressive today. Nevertheless, the article used "crippled" ten times and "defect" five times.

A July 16 article notes, "To the 40,000,000 or more drivers in the United States, it may be of slight importance that a few thousand cripples who lack total or partial use of their legs can learn to drive a car [...]."

Several organizations mentioned used "crippled" in their titles including the Association of Teachers of Crippled Children, the Federation of Crippled and Disabled and the Industrial Home for Crippled Children. It was not out of the ordinary to find the word "crippled" in many of the 1939 articles. When referring to 1909 or 1939 articles, the language, acceptable at that time, would not be acceptable today.

Although sterilization was not an unheard of procedure in the early 1900s, only one 1939 article about sterilization was found. The August 29 article concerned Germany and how a program such as theirs prevented people from going for early treatment for mental disease because of the fear of being sterilized.

In the 1939 *Times*, "infantile paralysis" accounted for seven cites or 50% of the preferred terminology used. Appearing three times (over 21%) was "blind." The following each received one mention: "cerebral palsy," "disabled," "has epilepsy" and "deaf."

An example of preferred terminology included an October 19 article which notes, "[...] The fete represented a major step in the campaign conducted by the Federation of

Crippled and Disabled to raise $150,000 for a cooperative rural community for disabled persons."

A January 20 article states,

> Dr. J. C. Curran, a physician and assistant to General Hugh S. Johnson, chairman of the Greater New York City Campaign Committee, emphasized that infantile paralysis was a long and expensive disease, for which no general cure nor preventative had yet been discovered.

1969 *The New York Times*

Of the 40 terms found in the 1969 *Times*, twenty-three or 58% of the terms were non-preferred. The most common disapproved term was "retarded" used eight or 34.8% of all non-preferred terms. Appearing four times or 17.3% was "handicapped," appearing three times or 13% was "crippled," appearing two times each or 8% was "Mongoloid"[3] and "suffering." The following each received one mention: afflicted," "insane," "disadvantaged" and "epileptic."

Many of the articles about physical disability dealt with Down syndrome and epilepsy. A February 2 article categorized under medical advances, used the terms "Mongoloid" and "retarded" when referring to a person with Down syndrome.

November 1 and December 31 articles about epilepsy mentioned "sufferers from epilepsy" and "physical ailments relating to the brain."

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[3] Mongoloid was the original term for someone with Down syndrome. It wasn't until the late 19th century that John Langdon Down, an English physician, published an accurate description of a person with Down syndrome. It was this scholarly work, published in 1866, which earned Down the recognition as the "father" of the syndrome. See National Down Syndrome Society. Ed. J. Schell. 4 Mar. 2000. National Down Syndrome Society. 30 Mar. 2000 http://www.ndss.org/aboutds/aboutds.html>.

Below are several non-preferred terminology examples from the 1969 *Times*.

> [. . .] Training the educable mentally retarded [. . .],
> [. . .] Make it mandatory that educational service units educate trainable mentally retarded children,
> [. . .] Was critical of having retarded adults feed retarded children, and the home has been the subject of criticism since a study committee created by Governor Norbert Tiemann last July said Nebraska has an 'archaic and fruitless program' for the retarded.

The term "mental retardation" was used by the medical profession during the mid-1900s and is still used today. According to Dr. Cynthia Ellis, associate professor of pediatrics and psychiatry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, "'Retarded' is not used by the medical profession, but 'mental retardation' is. It is a disability with a known diagnosis. The correct term is to say 'people with mental retardation.'" Ellis elaborated, "'Developmentally disabled' is a general term for several disabilities including 'mental retardation.'"

The media are familiar with the term "mental retardation" and what could be known as its slang term "retarded." According to the guidelines used, "retarded" and "mental retardation" are non-preferred terms, and the preferred term is "developmentally disabled," which is seldom used by the media.

The National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults was mentioned in a July 2 article. The article read

> A stamp that would urge public support of efforts at rehabilitating crippled children and adults. It is to be issued in conjunction with the 50th anniversary convention of the National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults [. . .].

The most preferred term in 1969 was "disabled/disability" used nine times or more than a half of all preferred terms. Appearing five times or 30% was "blind,"

two times or 18% was "Down syndrome" and one time or 6% was "speech disorder."

A January 16 news story cites,

> [. . .] Almost 2 million disabled workers and about 700,000 persons over the age of 72 who were not originally eligible but were covered by a special act. [. . .] Giving Medicare benefits to total disabled person would be the first extension of the Medicare program to anyone under 65 years of age.

A June 18 article states, "The deaf students, 7 to 12 years of age were taking part in an experimental after school program with a group of neighborhood children [. . .]."

1969 *Omaha World-Herald*

Of the 1969 *Herald* articles reviewed, 40% focused on mental retardation, and 30% were about hearing impairment. Table 2 illustrates the types of disabilities found in the research.

The most common non-preferred term (38%) was "retarded." "Handicapped" was used six times (33%). The following each received one mention: "hearing impaired," "invalid," "cripple," "deaf and dumb," "defects" and "victim."

Examples of non-preferred terminology from the *Herald* include an article from April 24 that reads, "Omaha Sen. Clifton Batchelder said he was concerned about the 'piecemeal approach' to the problem of the mentally retarded."

A January 14 article read, "The committee, which made a six-month study of the state's program for the mentally retarded, labeled the conditions at Beatrice and elsewhere 'one of the blackest pages in our state's book.'"

TABLE 2

Types of disabilities found in *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald.*

Types of Disability Covered	**Number of Articles/Percent**						
	The New York Times				***Omaha World-Herald***		**TOTAL**
	1909	**1939**	**1969**	**1999**	**1969**	**1999**	
Aged related disability			1				1 (1%)
Behavior disorder							
General terms of handicapped/disabled	1	1	2	18	1	17	40 (25%)
Hearing impairment		1	1		6	3	11 (7%)
Learning disability				4		1	5 (3%)
Mental illness	9	1	1			1	12 (8%)
Mental retardation		1	4	5	8	8	26 (16%)
Physical disability	3	14	9	3	2	3	34 (21%)
Speech and language disability							
Visual impairment	7	2	2	6	2	2	21 (13%)
Other (birth defects, blind and deaf)				4	1	5	10 (6%)
TOTAL	20	20	20	40	20	40	160

Another news story, January 22, said, "Others, who live in areas where there are no special education programs for the retarded, just sit at home and watch television. [. . .] Omaha's program for both groups of mentally handicapped children is unusual for a public school district [. . .]."

Of the eight preferred terms used, "deaf" appeared four times or 50% "blind" appeared three times or 37.5% and "paralyzed" appeared twice or 12.5%.

Preferred terminology in a November 21 article included, "Joe, who didn't play golf when he had his sight, now loves the game. It was one of the things he was encouraged to learn after he became blind."

Several articles included both non-preferred and preferred terminology, including an April 6 article. Non-preferred language included, "So he started teaching himself to live as an invalid," while preferred consisted of "Twenty-five years ago, Alfred Stevens, now 60, developed a spinal infection which left him paralyzed from the chest down." Also included in the same article was "Some of his self-taught lessons and practical devices now may help other handicapped persons."

1999 *The New York Times*

Only 20% or thirteen of the sixty-five terms found in the 1999 *Times* were non-preferred. "Retarded" appeared five times, "birth defects" twice and the following once each "handicapped accessible," "victim," "wheelchair bound," "wheelchair student," "visual impairment" and "speech and language delays."

Several examples of non-preferred terminology can be cited. A May 9 news article from the *Times* included four references to "wheelchair students," which was the only non-preferred terminology in the article. One example from the article includes, "The wheelchair students, some of whom also have developmental disabilities, had to navigate a street [. . .]."

The use of "developmental disabilities"[4] was the first such alternative preferred term for "retarded" to be recorded. Although "developmental disabilities" was found in the article cited above, the term didn't replace "retarded" in those other cases. "Developmental disabilities" is a preferred term included in the *Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services Guide* found in Appendix B.

Examples of non-preferred terminology include a March 21 *Times* article, which notes, "The lawsuit was inspired by a recent Federal case in Florida, in which the state was ordered to help thousands of retarded residents immediately or risk losing Medicaid money [. . .]."

A June 23 news story, which also contains non-preferred terminology states,

> The case involved a 1995 lawsuit filed on behalf of Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, both of them mentally retarded and mentally ill, who sought state care outside the Georgia Regional Hospital, where they had lived off and on for years.

Preferred terminology was used fifty-three times in the 1999 *Times.* The most common approved term was "disabled/disability" used twenty-four or almost a half of all preferred terms. Appearing ten times (18.8%) was "blind," four times (7.7%) was "deaf" and "uses a wheelchair," three times (5.7%) was "Down syndrome," two times (3.8%) were "cerebral palsy," "able-bodied," "developmentally disabled" and one time (1.8%) was "accessible to people with disabilities" and "impaired."

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[4] Developmentally disabled is a term that has become more popular in the last several years. A developmental disability is a severe mental or physical disability manifested prior to age 22 that is likely to continue indefinitely. Grein, Thomas, Breisky, Bill and other Disabilities Committee Members. "Reporting with People with Disabilities." ASNE Bulletin. 728 (Dec. 1990): pullout section.

Many examples of preferred terminology can be cited. An April 19 *Times* news article states, "The law has become broadly familiar for removing physical barriers in public places and for opening the workplace to people with disabilities."

A March 21 news article read,

> [. . .] Eight years after a Federal law went into effect requiring new multifamily dwellings to be accessible to people with disabilities. [. . .] The law requires, among other things, that common areas and first floor apartments and condominiums be accessible to people who use wheelchairs or walkers.

1999 *Omaha World-Herald*

Preferred terms outnumbered the non-preferred thirty-two to fourteen in the 1999 *Herald* articles, providing 70 percent of the total terms. Appearing three times (21.4%) was "handicapped accessible" and two times each (over 14% of the total) were "handicapped," "retarded," "visual impairment" and "wheelchair bound." The following each received one mention: "afflicted," "cripple" and "profoundly." The amount of non-preferred terminology used in the 1999 *Times* and *Herald* was almost exact.

Several examples of non-preferred terminology are cited. A June 13 *Herald* feature article said, "Thomas Flott is a 7-year-old with a wide grin but shy personality – a trait magnified by the communication gap he lives with as a profoundly deaf child."

An October 22 feature article read,

> [. . .] She collected almost $200 through school fund-raisers and had enough money to buy a therapeutic swing that wheelchair-bound children could sit in [. . .] Wheelchair-bound children will be able to play on the equipment via a ramp. At transfer stations they can lift their bodies out of their chairs and onto the equipment.

A June 30 news story talks about Clarence Victor, a death-row inmate, who has been convicted of killing three women. "[. . .] is fighting for life sentence under a state law that bans the execution of individuals who are mentally retarded or who have a diminished intelligence."

Preferred terminology was used thirty-two times and included "disabled/disability," which was used twenty-three times (71.8%), along with two references of "Down syndrome," "developmentally disabled" and "blind" and one reference of "is paralyzed," "has" and "has epilepsy."

A May 22 article said,

> Taking direct aim at health programs in poor communities, the Urban league of Nebraska announced Friday that $1.3 million will be spent during the next three years to raise awareness among low-income people and minorities with diabetes and developmental disabilities.

"A federal judge has ruled that school districts can be held responsible for the education of disabled students who live in other districts," a June 9 *Herald* news story read.

Of the 160 articles reviewed in the *Times* and *Herald*, 114 articles or 47% of the terminology was non-preferred while 130 articles or 53% of the terminology was preferred. The most commonly used non-preferred terminology included (in order of prominence) "retarded," "handicapped," "cripple," "insane" and "afflicted."

Hypothesis 2 – More recent disability-related news stories will include more preferred terminology than will earlier news stories.

The highest percentage of non-preferred terms was in the 1909 *Times* and the highest use of preferred terms appeared in the 1999 *Times*. (See Table 1, page 33).

In the 1909, 1939 and 1969 *Times* and 1969 *Herald* more non-preferred terms were used than preferred. In comparing the different years, the 1909 articles contained 25% preferred terms and the 1939 and 1969 *Times* were both consistent with 42%. The 1969 *Herald* was found to have 28% preferred terms, considerably less than the *Times*.

In both the 1999 *Times* and *Herald*, more preferred terms were used. Compared to earlier years, the number of preferred terms used in both the *Times* and *Herald* increased dramatically. Eighty percent of the terminology found in the *Times* was preferred while 70% was found in the *Herald*.

Research Questions

Research Question 1 – In what ways will coverage of people with disabilities change over the years?

In examining the 160 newspaper articles, which span ninety years, it is clear that many changes occurred in the terminology used to portray people with disabilities.

In looking at the non-preferred and preferred terminology used, it was quite different in 1909 and 1939. "Insane" was the most used non-preferred term in 1909, and "blind" was most preferred. In 1939, "defective" appeared at the non-preferred term while "infantile paralysis" was most preferred. "Retarded" was the most non-

preferred term and "disabled/disability" was the most preferred term in both the 1969 *Times* and *Herald.* In the 1999 *Times,* "retarded" was the most non-preferred term while "handicapped accessible" was the most non-preferred term in the *Herald.* Appearing in both the *Times* and *Herald* as the most preferred term was "disabled/disability."

Each year will be reviewed in succession for changes in terminology and types of disabilities covered in the articles.

1909 *The New York Times*

In the 1909 *Times* articles, 45% were concerning mental illness. (See Table 2, page 40). Since insane asylums and mental institutions were commonly used words in the early 1900s, it stands to reason that the majority of the articles from 1909 pertained to mental illness and the many "names" that were associated with the illness. Although this illness still exists today, different terms are used for its portrayal.

Examples of the non-preferred terminology include an article from February 17, which states, "Two dangerous lunatics are being sought by the authorities in all the counties [. . .]. Three criminal inmates of the Norristown Insane Hospital escaped [. . .]" In this same article, these "lunatics" also are called "maniacs."

An April 1 article notes, "One reason urged for the change from Creedmoor to some other site is that 400 acres will not give sufficient room for the lunatics to exercise and work in."

1939 *The New York Times*

Sixty percent of the 1939 *Times* articles focused on physical disabilities.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had infantile paralysis, was committed to raising awareness and funds for the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and the New York Infantile Paralysis Fund. His role resulted in a majority of the articles referring to physical disabilities. Roosevelt's 57th birthday party was a fund-raiser for infantile paralysis, and, prior to his birthday, tens of thousands of other balls and parties were held to raise money for this cause. Also mentioned in these articles is the "March of Dimes." Its slogan, which produced an avalanche of donations, included a concept where people filled "March of Dimes" cards with ten dimes or a dollar and donated it to the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

A January 22 *Times* article notes, "Net proceeds from the ball will augment the fund being raised by the Greater New York Committee in its campaign against infantile paralysis."

An October 19 news story states,

> Two new surgical operations until recently considered impossible, one of which permits the growing of straight limbs in children stricken with infantile paralysis while the other saves from certain death a high percentage of persons suffering from cancer of the esophagus (gullet) were described here today before the annual clinical congress of the American College of Surgeons [...].

Other physical disabilities included in the 1939 articles were epilepsy and cerebral palsy.

1969 *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald*

In 1969, more than one-third of the *Times* articles focused on physical disability and a fifth covered mental retardation (see Table 2). Of the seventeen preferred terms used in the 1969 *Times*, 47% included "disabled/disability," and of the eight uses of preferred terminology in the 1969 *Herald*, half consisted of "deaf" as opposed to "hearing impaired."

This September 21 *Times* news story, which consists of both non-preferred and preferred terminology, notes,

> Numerous speakers from various parts of the world stressed that the problems of the individual who is handicapped regardless of the cause of his handicap can be met only through individualized evaluation of his needs and abilities and individually prescribed programs to meet these needs with emphasis on ability rather than disability.

Compared to the other articles reviewed for this study, the article cited above was written with a progressive view. It was not common in 1969 for the articles to mention ability as opposed to disability.

A September 21 *Herald* article states, "There are 60 more students this year than two years ago. At least 400 are expected next fall. The current bulge was caused by a German measles epidemic in 1964 and 1965 which produced an unusual number of deaf children."

1999 *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald*

In 1999, the majority of the articles from both the *Times* (45%) and *Herald* (42.5%), were written using general terms of handicapped and disabled (see Table 2).

"Disabled/disability" was the most used preferred terminology in both the *Times* and *Herald.* Of fifty-two uses of preferred terminology in the 1999 *Times*, 45% included "disabled/disability, and of thirty-two uses of preferred terminology in the *Herald*, 72% consisted of "disabled/disability."

Among many examples of the preferred terms used in 1999, a March 31 *Times* article said, "People with disabilities are often unwilling to file a lawsuit, especially when compensatory damages and even lawyer fees are not assured."

A January 30 *Herald* news story states,

> Bearing signs declaring 'Leave the ADA alone' and 'I want to live in my home,' more than 60 disabled people and advocates for the disabled gathered Friday in the State Capitol to protest Nebraska's participation in a federal disability case.

Through the years, the coverage of people with disabilities has changed significantly. Not only has the coverage changed in relation to the type of disability covered but also to the terminology used when describing people with disabilities.

The most common disability covered in the newspaper articles changed from mental illness in 1909, physical disability in both 1939 and 1969 and general terms of handicapped/disabled in 1999. Also changing was the non-preferred and preferred terminology found in the *Times* and *Herald.* In the four years researched in the *Times*, the non-preferred words used most often were "insane," "cripple" and "retarded," which appeared most often in 1969 and 1999. "Retarded" and "handicapped" were the most used non-preferred terminology found in the two years researched in the *Herald.* In the *Times,* preferred terminology changed from "blind" in 1909, "infantile paralysis" in

1939 and "disabled/disability," which was used most often in 1969 and 1999. "Disabled/disability" appeared most often in both the 1969 and 1999 *Herald.*

A special note was made that more 1999 *Times* articles used the "people first" style of writing than did the 1999 *Herald.* That is, putting the person before the disability rather than the disability before the person. Many stories included both styles.

Several articles contained both the "people first" and "disability first" styles. A March 21, *Times* article included, "[. . .] dwellings accessible to people with disabilities [. . .]", and "On behalf of disabled individuals [. . .]." Both "people with disabilities" and "disabled workers" appeared in a November 19, *Times* article. The National Easter Seals Society advocates using the "people first" style as indicated in their guidelines. Their guidelines read, "Out of respect for the uniqueness and worth of the whole individuals and because a disabled condition may or may not be handicapping, use the word disability rather than the word handicap, but give reference to the person first."

Research Question 2 – How well do the newspapers meet their own policy standards?

Before the 1970s, it is difficult to know whether or not the newspaper reporters from either the *Times* or *Herald* followed their newspapers' policies.

In *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*, published in 1976, the only references to people with disabilities includes insane asylum and deaf and dumb, deaf-mute. The 1999 edition was expanded to include 16 different references (See Appendix B).

In comparing the entry from the 1999 edition of *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* to the terminology used in the 1999 articles, there were several words

found that, according to the stylebook, should not be used. They included "victim," "wheelchair-bound" and "wheelchair student."

The stylebook states that:

> Victim is applied to people with serious illnesses or disabilities, that term conveys an undesired tone of pity, and slights the aspects of their lives that may be unimpaired. Make it she has multiple sclerosis, not she is a victim of multiple sclerosis.

The only reference to a person who uses a wheelchair is under "handicapped." It reads:

> Use more specific terms for disabilities when possible. Many people with disabilities believe that the broad term exaggerates their limitations – because, for example, a person in a wheelchair is not handicapped if the workplace provides ramps.

Disabled/disability" was used 24 times, and according to the stylebook, should only be mentioned

> When pertinence will be clear to the reader. It is acceptable to speak of someone's physical or mental disability, but more specific descriptions are preferred: She cannot walk because of multiple sclerosis. When possible, treat disabled as an adjective or a verb. As a noun (the disabled) it may seem to equate widely diverse people and undervalue the productive parts of their lives.

One example when the reporters used preferred terms is the use of "Down syndrome." The "disability" entry above mentioned using "specific descriptions," which the reporters accomplished by using the term "Down syndrome."

"Retarded" was used five times in the news stories and "birth defects" twice, but neither was referenced in the stylebook.

With the exception of a few terms stated above, the *Times* reporters do follow their policies.

In the 1960s, the *Herald* was using *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, which made no reference to people with disabilities until the 1977 edition. The only entry was "deaf-mute." The first substantial entry appeared in 1986 and was then revised in 1995, which is the same reference in the 1999 stylebook. The current entry is under "disabled, handicapped, impaired" and lists terms including "disabled," "handicap," "blind," "deaf," "mute" and "wheelchair-user."

There were several words found in the 1999 *Herald* articles that, according to *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, should not be included. They were "handicap" and "wheelchair-user." The stylebook specifies that the word "handicap" should be avoided in describing a disability and that people use wheelchairs for independent mobility. Do not use confined to a wheelchair, or wheelchair-bound. If a wheelchair is needed, say why.

"Disabled/disability" was used twenty-three times in the 1999 *Herald* articles, and according to T*he Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, disabled is a "general term used for a physical or cognitive condition that substantially limits one or more of the major daily life activities."

"Retarded" was used twice in the news stories with no reference to this term in *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.*

With the exception of a couple of terms, almost the identical terms used in the *Times*, the *Herald* reporters do follow *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.*

Research Question 3 – What topic categories will be covered more than others?

As Table 3 indicates, no single category constituted more than 11% of the 160 articles from the *Times* and *Herald*. The most notable groupings by years include fundraising, more than a third of the 1939 *Times* stories; government policy, a fourth of the 1969 *Herald* stories; budget/expenditures, over 22% of the 1999 *Herald* stories, and legal, over 22% of the 1999 *Times* stories.

Topics for the "other" category included articles regarding wheelchair accessibility, euthanasia, awareness and a centennial celebration at the Nebraska School for the Deaf.

Research Question 4 – Will more articles about people with disabilities be news or feature stories?

Of the 160 articles in the *Times* and *Herald*, 125 were news stories and thirty-five were feature stories. Table 4 illustrates the breakdown of news and feature articles per year and newspaper reviewed. A fourth of all *Herald* stories were features and that features increased in the *Times* from only 5% in 1909 to 27% in 1999.

TABLE 3
Topic categories found in *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald.*

Topic Categories	Number of Articles/Percent						
	The New York Times				*Omaha World-Herald*		TOTAL
	1909	1939	1969	1999	1969	1999	
Budget/expenditure			4 (20%)		3 (15%)	9 (22.5%)	16 (10%)
Charity	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)			1 (2.5%)	6 (3.75%)
Crime	1 (5%)		2 (10%)	2 (5%)		4 (10%)	9 (5.62%)
Employment			1 (5%)	4 (10%)	1 (5%)	1 (2.5%)	7 (4.37%)
Fundraising	2 (10%)	7 (35%)				3 (7.5%)	12 (7.5%)
Government policy	3 (15%)		1 (5%)	6 (15%)	5 (25%)	2 (5%)	17 (10.62%)
Housing/ accommodation	2 (10%)			2 (5%)	2 (10%)	4 (10%)	10 (6.25%)
Integration in schools		2 (10%)		3 (7.5%)			5 (3.12%)
Intervention	1 (5%)	1 (5%)				1 (2.5%)	3 (1.87%)
Legal		1 (5%)		9 (22.5%)		3 (7.5%)	13 (8.12%)
Medical advances	3 (15%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	3 (7.5%)			11 (6.87%)
Normalization/ integration	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)	1 (2.5%)		1 (2.5%)	7 (4.37%)
Personal effort		1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (15%)	3 (7.5%)	9 (5.62%)
Post-school training or services					1 (5%)		1 (.62%)
Social contacts				2 (5%)		2 (5%)	5 (3.12%)
Sports						1 (2.5%)	1 (.62%)
Technology (non-medical)		2 (10%)		2 (5%)			4 (2.50%)
Teaching/instruction (schools)	2 (10%)		2 (10%)		3 (15%)	1 (2.5%)	8 (5%)
Transportation				2 (5%)			2 (1.25%)
Other	2 (10%)		4 (20%)	3 (7.5%)	1 (5%)	4 (10%)	14 (8.75%)
TOTAL	20 (100%)	20 (100%)	20 (100%)	40 (100%)	20 (100%)	40 (100%)	160 (100%)

TABLE 4
Types of articles reviewed in *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald.*

Types of Articles	**Number of Articles/Percent**						
	The New York Times				***Omaha World-Herald***		**TOTAL**
	1909	**1939**	**1969**	**1999**	**1969**	**1999**	
News	19 (95%)	16 (80%)	16 (80%)	29 (73%)	15 (75%)	30 (75%)	125 (78%)
Feature	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	4 (20%)	11 (27%)	5 (25%)	10 (25%)	35 (22%)
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Research Question 5 – Will the news stories have a major or minor focus on the disability?

Of the 160 articles in the *Times* and *Herald*, 80% of the stories had a major focus on the disability. Table 5 indicates the focus of articles from each year and newspaper reviewed.

TABLE 5
Focus of articles reviewed in *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald.*

Focus of Articles	**Number of Articles/Percent**						
	The New York Times				***Omaha World-Herald***		**TOTAL**
	1909	**1939**	**1969**	**1999**	**1969**	**1999**	
Major	20 (100%)	11 (55%)	13 (65%)	40 (100%)	19 (95%)	25 (63%)	128 (80%)
Minor	0	9 (45%)	7 (35%)	0	1 (5%)	15 (38%)	32 (20%)

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion and Conclusions: Newspapers Use More Preferred Terminology in Portraying People with Disabilities

The question was asked in the introduction of this thesis whether newspapers portray people with disabilities in non-preferred terms. As pointed out in the literature review, most scholars agree that print media have used more non-preferred terminology than the terms considered more appropriate by groups supporting the disabled. The investigator expected this to continue in the sample stories studied. The findings presented here did not support those expectations that disability-related news stories would include more non-preferred than preferred terminology. Considering all of *The New York Times* and *Omaha World-Herald* articles reviewed, non-preferred terminology appeared 47% of the time while preferred terminology was found 53% of the time. While not supported overall, this hypothesis proved true for the *Times* articles in 1909, 1939 and 1969. The 1999 *Times* and *Herald* articles prove the contrary, however, using enough preferred terms to contradict the general prediction (Table 1, page 33).

Although the measures used in this study may not reflect a consensus in assessing non-preferred and preferred terminology, the two guidelines used included The *National Easter Seals Society Guidelines*, "Portraying persons with disabilities in print," and the guide created by the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services (See Appendix A for guidelines). While it would have

been helpful to find some consensus set of national guidelines, the two guidelines used seem to parallel the language issues that concerned the media stylebooks.

In reviewing this study, it must be understood that these guidelines were established by those who advocate for people with disabilities, not newspaper editors. In comparing the guidelines from the human service organizations with those of the *Times* and *Associated Press*, the findings show that the newspaper guidelines were less inclusive than those created by the human service organizations. Between the *Times* and the *Associated Press* guidelines, those of the *Associated Press* were less inclusive.

As expected, more recent disability-related news stories included more preferred than non-preferred terminology. The 1999 *Times* and *Herald* contained more preferred terminology than the 1909, 1939 and 1969 newspapers. The most common preferred terminology was "disabled/disability," which appeared 72% of the time in the *Herald* and 46% in the *Times*. Over the years, the term "disabled/disability" has become the most common. In the *Times*, this term was used once in 1909 and again in 1939, seven times in 1969 and twenty-four times in 1999, and in the *Herald*, it was used four times in 1969 and twenty-three times in 1999. This could be because "disabled/disability" is more inclusive than any of the other terms.

The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage, used by the *Times*, and *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, used by the *Herald*, contained references to people with disabilities. From these references, it could be learned that reporters followed these guidelines most of the time. Several terms were used by the *Times*, that

according to the stylebook, should not be used. They included "victim," "wheelchair-bound" and "wheelchair student."

The two terms used that warrant discussion are "retarded" and "disabled/disability." Over 10% of the articles from the *Times* and 5% from the *Herald* used the term "retarded." There is absolutely no mention of this term in either *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* or *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*. "Retarded," a non-preferred term by the human service guidelines, does not appear anywhere in the *Times* or Associated Press stylebooks, but it seems that reporters continue to use this term. Why? Is this use habitual? Do they not know of a more preferred term? Remember that although "mental retardation" is a medical term, "retarded" is not.

The term "disabled/disability" appeared 24 times in the 1999 *Times* and 23 times in the *Herald*. According to the human services organization guidelines, "this term is preferred over handicapped. This is quite the contrary with *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*, which said "to mention disabilities only when their pertinence will be clear to the reader" and also "more specific descriptions are preferred." In comparing the two different sets of guidelines, it seems they are very different from each other. According to *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, disabled is a "general term used for a physical or cognitive condition that substantially limits one or more of the major daily life activities." The stylebook neither portrays it as a non-preferred or preferred term.

"Developmentally disabled" is a term that is increasingly being used by people in the human services field, but seems not as popular among the newspaper guidelines. The term was used twice in both the *Times* and *Herald*, but neither *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* or *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* reference this term. This is could be because "developmentally disabled" is a general term, and according to the stylebooks, the reporters are urged to use names of specific disabilities.

It was encouraging to advocates of the "person first" style to see it used in some of the 1999 articles. Before the 1999 articles, there was little mention of "people first" terminology. This style, putting the person before the disability rather than the disability before the person, was much more prevalent in the *Times* articles than in the *Herald.* The National Easter Seals Society embraces the "people first" style in their guidelines, which read,

> Out of respect for the uniqueness and worth of the whole individuals and because a disabled condition may or may not be handicapping, use the word disability rather than the word handicap, but give reference to the person first.

In Ellis' explanation of using the term "retarded," she also mentioned that the correct way to talk or write about with disabilities is to use the "people first" style.

An example of the "person first" style includes an October 20, 1999 *Times* article that states, "[. . .] passed a bill expanding Medicaid and Medicare so that hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities could return to work and keep their health insurance coverage."

In researching existing literature, it was found that many studies concentrated on a single year of newspaper coverage or a couple of years that were very close in proximity. In contrast, this study investigated several different years including 1909, 1939, 1969 and 1999 to see how the print media portray people with disabilities. This study was conducted in such a way that the investigator could examine the terminology used throughout the 1900s to examine how the terms regarding people with disabilities have changed.

In reviewing the *Times* and *Herald* articles, it can be said that the feature articles tended to consist of more non-preferred terminology. Examples of terms or phrases include "profoundly," "invalid," "blindness became his companion," "homebound" and "unfortunate." The feature stories used language that was more heartfelt.

It was found that a majority of the articles were about individuals described using the general terms of "handicapped" or "disabled," people with mental retardation, or physical disabilities (Table 2, page 40).

Through the years, the coverage of people with disabilities has changed significantly. Not only has the coverage changed in relation to the type of disability covered but also to the terminology used when describing people with disabilities.

The most common disability covered in the *Times* articles changed from mental illness in 1909 and physical disability in 1939 and 1969. Mental retardation was most common in the 1969 *Herald.* The general terms of handicapped/disabled were most common in both the 1999 *Times* and *Herald* articles.

It should be pointed out that "insane" was the most common non-preferred terminology used in 1909, "cripple" and "defective" were most common in 1939 and "retarded" was most common in the 1969 and 1999 *Times* and 1969 *Herald.*

In the *Times,* preferred terminology changed from "blind" in 1909, "infantile paralysis" in 1939 and "disabled/disability," which was used most often in 1969 and 1999. "Disabled/disability" appeared most often in both the 1969 and 1999 *Herald.* The preferred terminology used in the 1999 *Times* was 62.7% higher than that used in the *Herald.* The *Times*' reputation as a prestige newspaper of record makes this a respective finding.

Previously cited scholars agreed that more research should be conducted regarding the media and people with disabilities. The author also agrees with this statement.

It should be kept in mind that it is both conceivable and likely that the specific nature of press coverage would be different if another period was sampled. For example, the 1939 *Times* articles regarding infantile paralysis would not be prominent if a year was chosen when Franklin D. Roosevelt was not President of the United States. His influence resulted in many 1939 articles concerning infantile paralysis and the fund-raisers being held in honor of President Roosevelt's birthday. Of the 1939 articles, 70% were written about physical disability. Fifty percent of the preferred terminology used was "infantile paralysis." Of course, it would be difficult to choose a year in this period when Roosevelt was not president since his presidency ranged from 1932 to 1944.

The findings show that there wasn't one topic category that was more common than the others. Overall, government policy was most used with 10.62%, followed by legal and fundraising, both with 8.12%. The "other" category received 8.75% and included subjects such as wheelchair accessibility, euthanasia, awareness and a centennial celebration at the Nebraska School for the Deaf. In looking at a breakdown of every year, each topic category was different. In the 1909 *Times*, there were two most used categories, government policy and medical advances. Fundraising was most common in 1939, budget/expenditure in 1969 and government policy in 1999. In the *Herald*, government policy was the most used category in 1969, and budget/expenditure was most common in 1999.

The study conducted by Keller *et al.* (275) found that the references to people with disabilities tended to occur in feature or "soft" news rather than "hard" news and "to be about individuals with physical disabilities, mental retardation, or individuals identified by the generic labels 'handicapped' and 'disabled.'" With that in mind, it is not surprising that the 80% of the articles reviewed focused heavily on the disability (Table 5, page 55). It is also not surprising that 78% of the articles were news stories (Table 4, page 55). The majority of the news stories generally focused heavily on the disability.

Several suggestions should be made to reporters regarding the portrayal of people with disabilities. The most obvious suggestion would be that journalists make a conscious effort to use preferred terminology when portraying people with disabilities.

The one point that still needs to be mentioned is the fact that the human service and the newspaper guidelines do not use the same non-preferred and preferred terminology. Although journalists do need to be conscious of their terminology, it would be much easier if the terminology used by the human services organizations and the newspapers were consistent with each other. Another suggestion is for the organizations to communicate their preferred terminology to the newspapers. Of course, this communication will not bring about total consistency, but might, in fact, start the ball rolling.

There are obvious shortcomings to the study. The sampling was based on either twenty or forty news articles depending upon the year. A more fuller representation for a given period would come from a larger sampling or randomly selected weeks. Because of the limited sample, the results here cannot be generalized to other newspapers.

Despite these shortcomings, the general agreement is that recent disability-related stories include more preferred terminology than earlier news stories. As the preferred terminology has evolved through the years, it will continue to change, but will not likely become completely consistent given the differing priorities of human service groups and journalists. The former give priority to those described by the preferred language, while journalists also consider the clarity of terms to their readers.

APPENDIX A

Coding Guide

Disability covered:

aging related disabilities
behavior disorder (anxiety disorder, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, oppositional-defiant disorder and bipolar disorder
hearing impairment (deaf)
general terms of handicapped/disabled
learning disability
mental illness (schizophrenia, dementia)
mental retardation (Down Syndrome)
physical disability (Cerebral Palsy)
speech and language disability
visual impairment (Blind)
other

The disability a major or minor focus in the article? Major Minor

Type of article:

N news
F feature
O other

Topic of article:

budget/expenditure
charity
crime
employment
fundraising
government policy (excluding budget/ expenditure and integration in schools)
housing/accommodation
integration in schools
intervention
legal
medical advances
normalization/integration
personal effort
post-school training or services
social contacts
sports
teaching/instruction (schools)
technology (non-medical)
transportation
other

NON-PREFERRED	PREFERRED
afflicted	has
birth defects	disabled since birth, born with
cerebral-palsied	has cerebral palsy
cripple, crippled	walks with the aid of crutches or person with a disability/individual with a disability caused by or resulting from/persons with disabilities
deaf mute	deaf and speech impaired
defective	impaired
deformed	has a physical disability
drain/burden	condition requiring increased or additional responsibility/person whose condition requires intensive or additional care of adjustment
dummy	pre-lingually deaf
Elephant Man's disease	neurofibromatosis
emotionally disturbed	behavior disordered
epileptic	has epilepsy
former mental patient	mentally restored
handicapped	disabled, disability
handicapped accessible	accessible to people with disabilities, fully accessible
hearing impaired	deaf or hard of hearing
homebound	person whose ability to leave the home is limited
homebound employment	employment in the home
hunchbacked	has a spinal curvature
inflicted	caused by
insane, deranged, deviant	has a mental impairment
invalid, (literally, not invalid)	person who has a disability resulting from or caused by
lame	walks with a limp, uses crutches or person with an orthopedic disability
midget, dwarf	short-statured or little person
Mongoloid idiot	Down syndrome
normal	nondisabled, ablebodied
paralytic, arthritic	is paralyzed, has arthritis
retarded	cognitive disability, developmentally disabled
restricted to/confined to	uses a wheelchair/walks with crutches
victim	person who has/person who experienced/ person with
wheelchair bound	uses a wheelchair
unfortunate, pitiful, poor, and other words carrying value judgments; deaf and dumb, blind as a bat, crip, freak, deformed, and other clichés and terms that stereotype, disparage, or offend	no replacements
Added:	
visual impairment	blind
profoundly	
lunatic, maniac, sufferer	
wheelchair student	

APPENDIX B

National Easter Seals Society Guidelines

National Easter Seals Society Guidelines, "Portraying persons with disabilities in print," which were developed in 1980. These guidelines emphasize the uniqueness and worth of all persons rather than differences, keep the individual in perspective, and show the individual with a disability doing something independently. They also show persons with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, depict the typical achiever as well as the superachiever, emphasize consistency, and, avoid terms carrying negative connotations (i.e., "Cripple/crippled/the crippled – Say the person with a disability/individual with a disability caused by or resulting from/persons with disabilities.") Examples of terminology used many years ago to describe people with disabilities include cripple, feeble-minded, idiot, imbecile, stupid, wheelchair-bound, deaf and dumb, deformed, and victim, just to name a few. It is with the help of human service organizations that these terms have evolved through the years.

The National Easter Seals Society developed guidelines as part of the Society's observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

1. Out of respect for the uniqueness and worth of the whole individuals and because a disabled condition may or may not be handicapping, use the word disability rather than the word handicap, but give reference to the person first.

2. Because the person is not the condition, reference to the person in teams of the condition he or she has in inaccurate as well as demeaning.

3. Some categorical terms are used correctly only when communicating technical information – for example, hard of hearing, deaf, partially

sighted, and blind.

4. Avoid all terms carrying negative or judgmental connotations and replace them with objective descriptors. Some examples include:
   - Afflicted by/Afflicted with – Say the person *has*.
   - Cripple/Crippled/The Cripple – Say the person *with a disability/individual with a disability caused by or resulting from/persons with disabilities.*
     Drain/Burden – *Say condition requiring increased or additional responsibility/person whose condition requires intensive or additional care or adjustment.*
     Homebound – Say person *whose ability to leave the home is limited.*
   - Homebound employment – Say *employment in the home.*
   - Inflicted – Say *caused by.*
   - Invalid (literally, not valid) – Say the person who *has a disability resulting from or caused by.*
   - Lame – Say person *with an orthopedic disability.*
   - Restricted to/Confined to – Say *uses a wheelchair/walks with crutches.*
     Victim – Say person *who has/person who experienced/person with.*
   - Wheelchair Bound – Say *uses a wheelchair.*
   - Unfortunate, pitiful, poor, and other such words carrying value judgments; deaf and dumb, blind as a bat, crip, freak, deformed, and other such clichés and teams that stereotype, disparage, or offend - *No replacements.*

5. Be careful with certain words that, if used incorrectly, can reinforce negative misconceptions of persons who have disabilities.

Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services Guide

In 1994, the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services guide for journalists and the public to use when interacting with people with disabilities – people with speech impairments, the deaf or hard of hearing, people with visual impairments, people in wheelchairs or on crutches and people with cognitive disabilities. The Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services also printed a list of outdated expressions and recommended alternatives:

OBJECTIONABLE	PREFERRED
afflicted	has
birth defects	disabled since birth, born with
cerebral-palsied	has cerebral palsy
cripple, crip....	walks with the aid of crutches
deaf mute	deaf and speech impaired
defective	impaired
deformed	has a physical disability
dummy	pre-lingually deaf
Elephant Man's disease	neurofibromatosis
emotionally disturbed	behavior disordered
epileptic	has epilepsy
former mental patient	mentally restored
handicapped	disabled, disability
handicapped accessible	accessible to people with disabilities, fully accessible
hearing impaired	deaf or hard of hearing
hunchbacked	has a spinal curvature
insane, deranged, deviant	has a mental impairment
lame	walks with a limp, uses crutches
midget, dwarf	short-statured or little person
Mongoloid idiot	Down syndrome
normal	nondisabled, ablebodied
paralytic, arthritic	is paralyzed, as arthritis
retarded	cognitive disability, developmentally disabled

Reporting on People with Disabilities

(Created by the Disabilities Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1990)

A Glossary of Terms

Afflicted: Connotes pain and suffering. Most people with disabilities do not suffer chronic pain. It is better to be more specific. For example, "He has muscular dystrophy."

Alzheimer's Disease: A progressive, incurable, disabling brain disease leading to severe dementia. But by no means is it a synonym for dementia or senility. The disease is often misdiagnosed, and lay people often misuse its name.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS): A rapidly progressive neuromuscular disorder in adults. ALS is caused by degeneration of the motor nerves in the spinal cord and leads to atrophy of the muscles. Also known as "Lou Gehrig's disease."

Arthritis: Inflammation of the joints. There are two types: osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Do not say, "The woman is arthritic," but rather "She has arthritis."

Bipolar Disorder: A mental disorder caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain and characterized by severe mood swings. Also known as manic depression. People with this disorder generally are able to lead normal lives when the disorder is kept in remission by drug therapy. Some creative people with bipolar disorder have bursts of creativity during the so-called manic phase. (See Mania and Manic Depression)

Birth Defects: Try to avoid the term "defect' or "defective" when describing a person. "Congenital disability" is a reasonable synonym. (See Congenital Disability)

Blind: Describes a person with a total loss of vision. Not appropriate for persons with partial vision. Use "partially sighted" or "visually impaired" in those cases. (See visually impaired)

Cerebral Palsy (CP): A condition caused by damage to the brain, most often during pregnancy or labor or shortly after birth. It is not a disease and is neither progressive nor communicable. Do not refer to a person as "cerebral palsied," or as "a CP." The term "CP" can be used to describe the condition but not a person who has the condition.
Chronic: Applied to a disease that lasts a long time, as distinguished from a short-term, or acute, illness. Beware applying it to mental patients in a pejorative way, however, implying that they are beyond rehabilitation.

Client: A term often used in place of "patient" by health-care practitioners because it puts the service provider and the person receiving the service on a more equal footing. Increasingly, human service agencies are using the word "consumer" in the same way. (See patient)

Communicative Disorder: An umbrella term for speech, hearing and learning disabilities that affect the ability to communicate.

Congenital Disability: Describes a disability that has existed since birth. The term "birth defect" is not appropriate. (See birth defect)

Crippled: Avoid this negative word when referring to a person. Say "He has a physical disability."

Deaf: Describes a person with a total hearing loss. Not appropriate for persons with partial hearing. It is appropriate to say, "He is deaf." Do not say, "He is profoundly deaf." Deafness is not a disease and is caused by accidents as well as disease. (See Mute and Hearing Impairment)

Defect: Avoid using this negative term to describe a disability. Bad examples: "She suffers from a birth defect" or "He has a defective leg."

Deformed: Describe the condition rather than using this general, negative term. (See Disfigurement)

Developmental Disability: A severe mental or physical disability manifested prior to age 22 that is likely to continue indefinitely. The disability may substantially limit major activities such as mobility, learning, language and self-sufficiency.

Disability: A lack of competent power, strength, or physical or mental ability – a limitation of function imposed by an impairment. The Americans with Disability Act defines "disability' as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major activities of an individual.

Disabled: An adjective that describes a permanent or semi-permanent condition that interferes with a person's ability to do something independently, such as walk, see hear, learn or lift. Example: "The amputation of his leg left him partially disabled." Do not simply, "He is disabled" – because no one is totally disabled. And by all means do not use "disabled" as a noun – such as 'The disabled will gather." It can be argued that every human being is disabled in one or more ways. (See Handicap)
Disease: A sickness; an active ailment. A disability itself is not a disease and does not indicate poor health.

Disfigurement: A scarred, injured appearance. Do not refer to people with disfigurements as "the disfigured," "victims of disfigurement," or "deformed." (See Deformed)

Down's Syndrome: Preferred over "mongoloid" to describe a form of mental retardation caused by improper chromosomal division during gestation.

Dying: About to die – a person near or at the time of death. Avoid saying someone is "dying of cancer" or "dying of AIDS" at a time when they are, in fact, living with those diseases.

Dwarf: A medical term applied to some persons very short in stature and not normally proportioned. Dwarfism generally is hereditary, and there are more than 80 different types. Referring to a person of small stature as a "dwarf" or "midget" as general terminology is inappropriate.

Epilepsy: A disorder marked by disturbing electrical rhythms of the central nervous system resulting in seizures. Do not call someone "an epileptic" but rather a "person with a seizure disorder. (See seizure)

Guide Dog: A dog used by people who are blind or deaf to help guide them. Note that "Seeing Eye Dog" is a trademark; hence, all guide dogs are not Seeing Eye Dogs.

Handicap: Can be used to describe a condition that restricts normal achievement, but such usage has become less acceptable. Except when citing laws or regulations, avoid using "handicap" to describe a disability. The term should be used in reference to environmental barriers preventing or making it difficult for full participation. For example, people who have paralysis and use a wheelchair are handicapped by stairs. Also avoid the expression "handicapped access" – which implies that the access is handicapped. (See Disabled)

Handicapped Person: Use "person with a disability in most instances." A disabling condition may or may not be handicapping. (See Disabled and Handicap)

Hearing Impairment: Use to describe loss of hearing from slight to severe. Some people prefer the term "partial hearing." Hearing-impaired or hard-of-hearing people are not deaf. Some 14 million Americans are hearing impaired, while 2 million are deaf. (See Deaf)

Homebound: Means bound for home. Don't apply it to people who, as a result of their disabilities, spend a great deal of time at home.

Impaired: Used when referring to physical impairment. But "a person with partial hearing" is preferable to "he is hearing impaired."

Invalid: Literally means "not valid." Do not use it to describe a person with a disability.

Lame: An old term used to describe a disability. Avoid it, as it is almost always seen as negative.

Learning Disability: A general term that applies to physical or psychological problems that affect learning. Sometimes indicates the existence of minimal brain dysfunction. (MBD)

Mainstreaming: The principle of integrating persons with disabling conditions into society at large.

Mania and Manic Depression: Mania is a type of mental disorder characterized by impulsiveness and intense craving. Manic depression is a type of psychosis characterized by mood swings from mania to depression. "Bipolar disorder" is the preferred term for manic depression. (See Bipolar Disorder)

Mentally Ill: A person diagnosed as having a mental disorder. Terms such as "mentally deranged" or "crazy" are inappropriate. "Neurotic," "paranoid," "sociopathic," and "schizophrenic" are specific and technical medical terms.

Mental Retardation: Describes a person with significantly below-average general intellectual functioning, manifested during the developmental period. Can range from mild to profound. Terms such as "moron," "mentally deficient" or "feeble-minded" are very often misused and misunderstood.

Mongoloid: Avoid this term. Rather use "a person with Down's Syndrome" or "people with mental retardation. (See Down's Syndrome)

Multiple Sclerosis (MS): An unpredictable, progressive, potentially crippling condition of the brain and spinal cord that generally has its onset in young adulthood.

Muscular Dystrophy (MD): A generally hereditary, progressive condition that weakens the muscles.

Non-Disabled: Avoid using "non-disabled" or "able-bodied" to describe people without a disability. Such terms imply that persons with disabilities are generally less able.

Normal: A thing or trait that conforms to a standard or a mainstream pattern; approximately average in a psychological trait such as intelligence or personally. Better to describe the trait, rather than the person, as "normal." Avoid this term when describing a person without a disability.

Paranoid: Deluded, often to the extent of feeling persecuted. Generally, this term is regarded as a symptom rather than a diagnosis.

Paraplegia: Total or partial paralysis of both legs. (See Quadriplegia)

Patient: Use this term only when referring to someone presently in a hospital or under a doctor's immediate care. Do not say "He was a polio patient," but rather "He had polio." (See Client)

Polio: Poliomyelitis. An acute infectious viral disease resulting in paralysis because of damage to the motor nerve cells of the spinal cord. Paralysis caused by polio is stable and not progressive once the infection is over. Do not say "polio victim" or "polios." Say "a person who had polio." (See Post-Polio Syndrome)

Post-Polio Syndrome: A condition that occurs in adulthood in people who had polio. It is characterized by fatigue and muscle weakness. Many people who had polio as children appear to have experienced post-polio syndrome. (See polio)

Quadriplegia: Paralysis of all four limbs. (See Paraplegia)

Rehabilitation: Attempting to restore a person to an optimum state of health. There's a major emphasis today on "rehab"/vocational training of people with physical and mental disabilities. Those who press for better rehabilitation services are most commonly referred to as "consumer advocates."

Schizophrenia: A major mental disorder characterized by a distortion of reality. It generally results in a "shattered personality," not a "split personality." The clinical term for the latter is "multiple personalities." Schizophrenia is not a synonym for psychosis.

Seeing Eye Dog: A dug used by people who are blind to help guide them. "Seeing Eye Dog" is a trademark; hence, all guide dogs are not necessarily Seeing Eye Dogs. When in doubt, say "guide dog."

Seizure: An involuntary muscular contraction symptomatic of the brain disorder epilepsy. The term "convulsion" should be reserved for seizures involving contractions of the entire body. The term "fit" is used in England, but it has strong negative connotations in the United States. (See Epilepsy)

Spastic: An adjective describing a muscle with sudden, abnormal and involuntary spasms. It is not appropriate for describing a person with cerebral palsy. Muscles, not people, are spastic.

Special: Not an appropriate term to describe persons with disabilities in general. It is seen as patronizing. Some groups have tried to find other terms to describe people with

disabilities, such as "physically challenged" or "differently abled." These terms tend to confuse people, often trivialize disabilities, and do not inform the public.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD): Describes a disorder in the ability to learn effectively in a regular educational environment. Does not include persons with vision, hearing or motor disabilities, those who are mentally retarded or persons who are culturally or economically disadvantaged. The term "specific learning disability" is preferred because it emphasizes that the disability affects only certain learning processes.

Speech Impaired: Describes persons with limited or difficult speech patterns. (See Stutter)

Spina Bifida: A congenital condition in which the vertebrae of an unborn child fail to close completely. The condition limits motor activity to varying degrees.

Stricken With: Try saying, "a person who has."

Stroke: Cerebral vascular accident. Most strokes occur when blood to the brain is interrupted by a blood vessel obstruction.

Stutter: Say "people who stutter," not "stutterers." (See Speech Impaired)

Suffers From: It is wrong to assume that an individual "suffers" from a disability.

Vegetable: Do not apply this term to a human being. Rather, say "a person with severe disabilities," or simply describe the person's condition.

Victim: A person with a disability is not necessarily a victim. Do not say "a cerebral palsy victim" or "AIDS victims" but rather a "person who has cerebral palsy" or "people with AIDS." The term victim connotes someone who was in an accident or a war, or who generally was violated or deceived.

Visual Impairment: Used to describe a person with a vision lose that is less than total. A more positive way of putting it is: "a person with partial vision." A person with partial vision is not blind. (See Blind)

Wheelchair: Do not say that a person is "confined to a wheelchair" or is "wheelchair-bound." Rather say, "She uses a wheelchair." Wheelchairs help with mobility; they do not imprison people.

Excerpts from *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage* (1999)

disability, disabled. Mention disabilities only when their pertinence will be clear to the reader. It is acceptable to speak of someone's physical or mental disability, but more specific descriptions are preferred: She cannot walk because of multiple sclerosis. When possible, treat disabled as an adjective or a verb. As a noun (the disabled) it may seem to equate widely diverse people and undervalue the productive parts of their lives. Also see cripple, crippled; handicapped; impaired.

cripple, crippled. Do not use these words when mentioning disabilities (she is a cripple; he was crippled by polio). Instead: She lost the use of her legs to polio; He has been unable to walk since an automobile accident in 1992. Also see afflicted; challenged; deformed; disability, disabled; handicapped; impaired.

afflicted. Generally use less emotional language in citing disabilities. She has cancer, not She is afflicted with cancer. Also see disability, disabled; suffer; victim.

handicapped. Use more specific terms for disabilities when possible. Many people with disabilities believe that the broad term exaggerates their limitations? because, for example, a person in a wheelchair is not handicapped if the workplace provides ramps. Also see challenged; cripple, crippled; disability, disabled; impaired.

challenged. Do not use this euphemism for disabilities (he is hearing-challenged). Write instead that he cannot hear or that she is partly blind. Also see afflicted; blind; cripple, crippled; deformed; handicapped; impaired; victim.

impaired. In references to people with disabilities, it usually means a correctable or less than total loss of a function or ability. Someone with less than 100 percent hearing may be described as hearing-impaired. Also see blind; challenged; deaf; disability, disabled; handicapped.

deformed. Use more specific, less disparaging terms in referring to disabilities. Also see cripple, crippled; disability, disabled; handicapped; impaired.

blind. Apply the word only to those who have no sight. Others may have limited sight or be partly blind. Do not use euphemisms like visually challenged or visually impaired. Also see disability, disabled.

deaf. Apply the term to someone who cannot hear at all. Others may be hard of hearing or have partial hearing. If possible, cite the extent of the hearing loss. See disability, disabled; dumb; impaired; mute.

dumb. has become a term of disparagement. Do not use it for someone who cannot speak. Instead use mute, or say the person cannot speak, preferably specifying why. Also see deaf and disability, disabled.

suffer. Avoid this pitying term in references to people with disabilities. Make it he has AIDS, not he suffers from AIDS. Also see afflicted; stricken; victim.

stricken. In mentioning the onset of an illness, avoid terms that overstate the patient's disability. Make it she contracted tuberculosis, not the dramatic she was stricken with tuberculosis. Also see afflicted; suffer; victim.

victim. Applied to people with serious illnesses or disabilities, the term conveys an undesired tone of pity, and slights the aspects of their lives that may be unimpaired. Make it she has multiple sclerosis, not she is a victim of multiple sclerosis. Also see afflicted; stricken; suffer.

AIDS advocate. The term is illogical; no one advocates AIDS. Make it advocate for AIDS research or advocate for AIDS patients, or otherwise specify the cause.

AIDS victim. See afflicted; stricken; suffer; victim.

Excerpts from *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* (1986)

Disabled, handicapped, impaired in general do not describe an individual as *disabled* or *handicapped* unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. If such a description must be used, make it clear what the handicap is and how much the person" physical or mental performance is affected.

Some terms include:

disabled A general term used for a physical or cognitive condition that interferes with an individual's ability to do something independently.

handicap It should be avoided in describing a disability.

blind Describes a person with complete loss of sight. For others use terms such as *partially blind.*

deaf Describes a person with total hearing loss. For others use partial hearing loss. For other use *partial hearing loss* or *partially deaf.*

mute Describes a person who physically cannot speak. Others with speaking difficulties are *speech impaired.*

wheelchair-bound A person may use a wheelchair occasionally or may have to use it for mobility. If it is needed, say why.

Excerpts from *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* (1996 and 1999)

Disabled, handicapped, impaired in general do not describe an individual as *disabled* or *handicapped* unless it is clearly pertinent to a story. If such a description must be used, make it clear what the handicap is and how much the person" physical or mental performance is affected.

Some terms include:

disabled A general term used for a physical or cognitive condition that substantially limits one or more of the major daily life activities.

handicap It should be avoided in describing a disability.

blind Describes a person with complete loss of sight. For others use terms such as *visually impaired* or *person with low vision.*

deaf Describes a person with total hearing loss. For others use partial hearing loss. For other use *partial hearing loss* or *partially deaf.* Avoid using *deaf-mute.* Do not use *deaf and dumb.*

mute Describes a person who physically cannot speak. Others with speaking difficulties are *speech impaired.*

wheelchair-user People use wheelchairs for independent mobility. Do not use confined mobility. Do not use *confined to a wheelchair*, or *wheelchair-bound.* If a wheelchair is needed, say why.

APPENDIX C

Articles Used in This Study

1909 *The New York Times*

"Wheeler Advises Limiting Appeals," 29 Jan. 1909, pg. 8
"Exhibit for Blind in History Museum," 31 Jan. 1909, pg. 10
"Race with Death for Gift," 9 Feb. 1909, pg. 2
"Seek Two Escaped Maniacs," 17 Feb. 1909, pg. 1
"Campaign Begin to Prevent Blindness," 28 Feb. 1909, pg. 7
"Straus Answers Ferris," 1 Mar. 1909, pg. 3
"Hospitals Work to Avert Insanity," 14 Mar. 1909, pg. 8
"Deported with Boy He Vowed to Cherish," 18 Mar. 1909, pg. 14
"Cripples Now Share Public School Work," 21 Mar. 1909, pg. 9
"The Blind Dispute Rival Book Systems," 25 Mar. 1909, pg. 9
"Mrs. Mackay Wars on New Asylum," 1 Apr. 1909, pg. 9
"Inspect Land Grab in Asylum Project," 8 Apr. 1909, pg. 3
"$10,000 for Blind at Hippodrome Benefit," 8 May 1909, pg. 3
"Hippodrome Show for Blind," 12 May 1909, pg. 7
"Doctor of Insane Becomes a Victim," 16 May 1909, pg. 2
"Plan Jersey Home for Blind Babies," 25 July 1909, pg. 14
"Row Over New Site of School for Blind," 1Aug. 1909, pg. 5
"Testing Insanity in the Laboratory," 1 Aug. 1909, pg. 16
"Epidemic of Infant Paralysis Spreads," 29 Aug. 1909, pg. 6
"The Problem of the Unfit," 31 Oct. 1909, pg. 4

1939 *The New York Times*

"Informal Education Aids Truant, Test With 600 Children Shows," 4 Jan. 1939, pg. 23
"17 State Units aid in Paralysis Drive," 20 Jan. 1939, 17, pg. 2
"Theme of Americanism Arranged for the President's Ball on Jan. 30," 22 Jan. 1939, II, pg. 3
"Music is Arranged for Birthday Ball," 24 Jan. 1939, pg. 16
"14 Cripples set up Typing Business," 29 Jan. 1939, pg. 34
"City Celebrations Attended by 8,000," 31 Jan. 1939, pg. 10
"Paralysis Fund for 1938 Audited," 8 Feb. 1939, pg. 21
"Party in Theatre Arranged to Aid Blind Musicians," 26 Feb. 1939, II, pg. 1
"Library Assists 2,800 Sightless," 16 Apr. 1939, II, pg. 5
"Acceptance Urged for Aids to Deaf," 4 June 1939, pg. 45
"Special Cars for the Handicapped," 16 July 1939 , X, pg. 6
"Link to Heredity is seen in Anemia," 24 Aug. 1939, pg. 15
"Southampton Fete Children's Benefit," 26 Aug. 1939, pg.19

"Helping Crippled Children Make Adjustment to Life," 27 Aug. 1939, II, pg. 7
"125 U.S. Geneticists in no Rush to Sail," 29 Aug. 1939, pg. 23
"Schools Drop Fear as Truancy Curb," 20 Sept. 1939, pg. 29
"Custom Fete Aids Fund for Crippled," 19 Oct. 1939, pg. 20
"Surgery in Cancer Does 'Impossible,'" 19 Oct. 1939, pg. 25
"Rolling Rock Course Attracts Many to the Autumn Running," 22 Oct. 1939, pg. 19
"$463,972 Advances War on Paralysis," 26 Dec. 1939, pg. 32

1969 *The New York Times*

"Broader Benefits," 16 Jan. 1969, pg. 1
"3 Commemoratives Added to Program," 2 Feb. 1969, II, pg. 31
"Genetics Clinics Predict Defects," 2 Feb. 1969, pg. 76
"Legislature Gets Consumer Bills," 10 Feb. 1969, pg. 40
"Christmas Card Gives a Boy of 11 a Reason to be Proud," 10 June 1969, pg. 42
"City Hospitals in Crisis," 15 June 1969, pg. 71
"School Broadening Horizons of the Deaf," 18 June 1969, pg. 49
"Mafia Link to L.I. Charity Is Charged," 20 June 1969, pg. 28
"Welfare Report Brings Donations," 31 July 1969, pg. 32
"Just an Apartment, but to the Blind, It's Special," 6 Aug. 1969, pg. 44
"Nixon Proposes an Overhaul of Welfare," 9 Aug. 1969, pg. 11
"World Medical Care" 21 Sept. 1969, pg. 83
"Nixon Seeks Link in Social Security to Cost of Living," 26 Sept. 1969, pg. 29
"Help for the Retarded," 28 Sept. 1969, pg. 79
"V.A., Reserving Policy, Agrees to Release All Data on Ratings It Gives Hearing Aids," 30 Oct. 1969, pg. 29
"A New Treatment for Epilepsy," 1 Nov. 1969, pg. 47
"Mongolism Baffles Science Despite 10-Year Study," 27 Nov. 1969, pg. 46
"Rehabilitation 1969," 28 Dec. 1969, pg. 59
"Dreyfus Retires to Promote a Drug," 31 Dec. 1969, pg. 1
"Sex Chromosome Linked to Crime," 31 Dec. 1969, pg. 10

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"Justices Will Decide the Issue of Correctable Disabilities," 9Jan. 1999m, A, pg. 9
"Proposal Aims at Returning Disabled Workers to Jobs," 13 Jan. 1999, A, pg. 12
"9 Are Charged in Tormenting of Learning-Disabled Man," 17 Feb. 1999, B, pg. 5
"A Town Searches Its Soul," 17 Feb. 1999, B, pg. 4
"Disabled Find Housing Fails on Access Test," 21 Mar. 1999, XIV-WC, pg. 8
"Retarded Must Get Faster Aid, Suit Says," 21 Mar. 1999, I, pg. 27
"Airline Use Found Hard for Disabled," 31 Mar. 1999, A, pg. 16
"New Data on Babies of Women With Birth Defects," 8 Apr. 1999, A, pg. 20

"Joy of E-Mail Lights Up the Life of a Retarded Teen-Ager," 8 Apr. 1999, G, pg. 8
"Disabled Woman Seizes Program's Lifeline," 11 Apr. 1999, XIV-WC, pg. 3
"Pivotal Rulings Ahead for Law on Disabilities," 19 Apr. 1999, A, pg. 1
"Justices Wrestling With the Definition of Disability: Is it Glasses? False Teeth?," 28 Apr. 1999, A, pg. 26
"Link to City Most Obvious When It Fails," 7 May 1999, B, pg. 1
"After Waiting for Years, Students in Wheelchairs Get Lift," 9 May 1999, XIV-CY, pg. 8
"Sounds of Spring: Beeping Ball, Buzzing Base," 9 May 1999, XIV-LI, pg. 4
"A Job Fair Links Businesses and the Disabled," 16 May 1999, XIV-WC, pg., 10
"Justices, 9-0, Find No Inherent Conflict Between 2 Laws on Disabled Workers," 25 May 1999, A, pg. 24
"Schools Are Faulted on Access," 29 May 1999, B, pg. 3
"Economic Scene," 31 May 1999, A, pg. 8
"A Co-op That Bans Dogs Makes an Exception," 6 June 1999, XI, pg. 7
"Melatonin Used to Restore Sleep Patterns in Blind People," 22 June 1999, F, pg. 6
"High Court Limits Who is Protected by Disability Law," 23 June 1999, A, pg. 1
"States Limited on Institutionalization," 23 June 1999, A, pg. 16
"High Court Sends Claim of Disability To Rehearing," 25 June 1999, B. pg. 5
"Paper Born of Necessity Aids the Disabled," 11 July 1999, XIV-WC, pg. 4
"A Big Step In a Job That Fits," 25 July 1999, XIV-WC, pg. 14
"Drug Company Ads Attack Medicare Coverage of Drugs," 29 July 1999, A, pg. 18
"Deal in Albany On Overhaul In the Schools," 3 Aug. 1999, B, pg. 1
"A Special Camp Just for Special Children," 8 Aug. 1999, XIV-LI, pg. 4
"Tough New Subject As Classes Start: Security in Schools" 5 Sept. 1999, XIV-LI, pg. 1
"The Underdog's Bulldog," 26 Sept. 1999, XIV-NJ, pg. 4
"Mother of Brain-Damaged Baby Sues Hospital," 2 Oct. 1999, B, pg. 2
"Princeton Biothics Professor Debates Views on Disability and Euthanasia," 13 Oct. 1999, B, pg. 8
"Clinton Orders Government To Try to Hire More Disabled," 17 Oct. 1999, I, pg. 34
"House Approves Medicare Extension for the Disabled," 20 Oct. 1999, A, pg. 23
"Mayor Accuses Critics of Scare Tactics," 27 Oct. 1999, B, pg. 3
"The Blind Leading the Sighted," 28 Oct. 1999, G, pg. 1
"Seeing Anew In a World of Light and Darkness," 1 Nov. 1999, E, pg. 1
"Bill Expands Health Benefits for Disabled People Who Work," 19 Nov. 1999, A, pg. 33

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"Omaha Schools' Work With Retarded 'Successful Enough to Be a Model'" 22 Jan.1969

"'Retard's Best Home A Small One,'" 19 Mar. 1969
"Invalid Outwits His Problems," 6 Apr. 1969
"Retarded Education Hits Debate Snag," 24 Apr. 1969
"Parents Fight Bill on Costs of Deaf, Blind," 30 Apr. 1969
"Handicapped Adults Find New World in Work," 8 June 1969
"2 Retardation Bills Survive," 26 June 1969
"Oldest Alumnus at School for Deaf," 17 July 1969
"NSD Chief: Only 8 Can Enroll in Fall," 19 July 1969
"Deaf School Asks Boost of $108,222," 22 July 1969
"Aid to Mentally Retarded Helps Pupil, Teacher," 15 Aug. 1969
"County Board Cut Only $54,086 Below Pleas," 29 Aug. 1969
"Love Rings Loudly in a Silent World," 21 Sept. 1969
"Karen Finds Pathway to Life, And It's Paved With Happiness," 28 Sept. 1969
"Welfare Role For 'Chance' Given Okay," 15 Oct. 1969
"'Deaf Americans Also Discontented Minority,'" 13 Nov. 1969
"Regents Ask More Funds For the Deaf," 15 Nov. 1969
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