

ROADS TO TRAVEL
A Historical Look at *The Freedman's*
***Torchlight*—An African American**
Contribution to 19th-Century
Instructional Technologies

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A Jim Crow society breeds and needs a Jim Crow historiography. The dominant historiography in the United States either omits the Negro people or presents them as a people without a past, as a people who have been docile, passive, parasitic, imitative. This picture is a lie. The Negro people, the most oppressed of all people in the United States, have been militant, active, creative, productive.

—Aptheker (1979, introduction)

African Americans have been active producers throughout the history of the United States; however, during most of this history, their role in such capacities has been ignored, lost, destroyed, excluded, omitted, sporadically documented, or contained in books read by an elite few. This research reveals critical moments in U.S. history when African Americans contributed to the field of instructional technology and the nature of those contributions. In particular, this study examines *The Freedman's Torchlight*¹ (*TFT*) (American Missionary Association, 1866/1980), a newspaper textbook, to ascertain elements of the design that are culturally and racially specific. Moreover, this research is undergirded by a desire to document the ways in which African Americans have been active participants in educating themselves and to support the inclusion of



African American instructional materials into the field of instructional technology.

African Americans have been identified by many terms throughout history (i.e., Negro, Colored, Black, African American); therefore, the names indicative of the time period will be represented throughout. Given contemporary terminology, the names *Black* and *African American* will be used interchangeably to represent the same group of people. The term *Black* has replaced *Negro* in many cases where the translation did not harm the interpretation of history. Another term not readily used in contemporary literature is *Freedmen*. Freedmen were men, women, and children:

That all their life time had been in slavery, doomed to cruel bondage; whipped, sold, sundered apart from dearest friends and relatives—they were driven like cattle to the market, and sold upon the auction block to the highest bidder. (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 2)

Freedmen were enslaved Black people; they will be referred to as freed Blacks where appropriate.²

Below the heading of *TFT* reads the biblical verse, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31. This verse captures the hope and plight of freed men, women, and children as they journeyed toward emancipation. This article proceeds with a look at the historical climate surrounding the year 1866, an overview of the methodology and analysis, and the findings.

THE HISTORICAL CLIMATE

TFT was published in January 1866. A year before its publication, Abraham Lincoln signed The Thirteenth Amendment to abolish slavery, but not until December 1865 was the Amendment ratified, calling for the entire dismantling of slavery ending the Civil War (Foner, 1988). But what did freedom really mean or look like for African Americans?

The Civil War was fought by the Confederate South and the Union North. The South housed almost 4 million enslaved Blacks

who were isolated from the world. Enslaved Blacks' subjugation confined them to the plantation and prevented them from communicating with the outside world and acquiring information. The acquisition of knowledge in the way of reading, writing, or a school-oriented education was prohibited. All slave states except Kentucky forbade the teaching of reading and writing to enslaved Blacks. If caught reading or writing, Blacks were likely to be maimed, killed, flogged, or fined (Webber, 1978; Whiteaker, 1990). Some enslaved Blacks stayed informed about events outside the South by overhearing conversations between Whites and then relaying that information to others in the slave quarters. News might be relayed during unsupervised church services or through the "grapevine telegraph" that reportedly contained a coded language enabling Blacks to communicate about taboo subjects while in the presence of Whites (Litwack, 1979, p. 23).

When the announcement about emancipation seeped through the cotton curtain, freed Blacks² responded in their own way. Some chose not to speak with their masters about it, whereas others feared retaliation in the form of harsh treatments or flogging. When possible, freed Blacks fled to the Union lines in hopes of refuge. Many who fled plantations returned due to homesickness for their families, frustration with the lack of employment, starvation, or exhaustion in trying to reach Union lines. Others faced death by cholera or smallpox or became victims of murder. These situations scared others from leaving the plantation. However, there were many brave souls who sought autonomy despite the odds and the mysteriousness of freedom (Litwack, 1979).

THE ROLE OF THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

Pressured to provide for Blacks who escaped or abandoned their plantations heading for Union lines in search of freedom (H. A. Bullock, 1967; Foner, 1988; Litwack, 1979), Congress enacted the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands Act (known as The Freedmen's Bureau) on March 3, 1865. The Freedmen's Bureau addressed matters pertaining to confiscated property,

White Union refugees, and freed Blacks. Legally, it was in charge of relief work, education, the control of labor, and the management of justice (Butchart, 1980). Foner (1988) pointed out the transitory nature of this act in that it was renewed on July 6, 1866, enacted again on July 6, 1868, for one more year, and discontinued on January 1, 1869 (except for the education and bounty divisions). The act was finally abolished on June 30, 1872. The transitory nature of this act exemplifies the ambivalence of the government to provide for the needs of freed Blacks and the temporal assistance given to Black people after almost 250 years of slavery.

The legislation of this act was assisted by the Freedmen's Aid movement that began as an effort of secular societies and denominational boards to provide relief to former slaves. The Freedmen's Aid Societies, as they were called, provided basic supplies, food, clothing, and medicine. In 1863, the secular societies petitioned the government for assistance with providing for the needs of freed Blacks, and 2 years later, the government formed the Bureau (Butchart, 1980). The aid societies acted as conduits through which the Bureau could distribute relief monies and supplies.

The Bureau's ability to properly administer its duties were always precarious. There were reports of corruption and incompetence (Bond, 1966). Litwack (1979) argues that the Bureau performed poorly in their efforts toward education, housing, food, employment, and other needs of the mass number of freed Blacks. As an example when freed Blacks sought refuge in the Union cities where there were Freedmen's Bureaus, they were turned away and forced to return to their former masters. Litwack (1979) and Butchart (1980) reported that the Bureau operated to reestablish the labor of Blacks back to the plantations from which they escaped. This action appeased planters need for labor and kept the economic and political structure of the south intact.

Bond (1966) and H. A. Bullock (1967) contended that the Bureau's main purpose was to educate. Butchart (1990) argued that initially, the education of freed Blacks meant the education of Black adult men and women. (During most of the 1860s, the South's Black school house "lacked age-specificity"; adults and children learned in the same classroom; p. 47.) There was a rush to

educate the Black adult before he or she retaliated (Butchart). Butchart further argued that schooling became a system of control and a road through which White ideologies and agendas regarding emancipation's political and social effects were channeled. He adds that the crux of the educational goals of these aid societies was to create obedient, moral, Christian Blacks. The school would serve as the place of social discipline where the ideologies of the dominant society would be perpetuated. Educational reformers (such as the American Missionary Association) perceived education for Blacks as a panacea (Butchart, 1980). According to Butchart, education was thought to accomplish such goals as preparing Blacks for participation in civilized American life and restructuring the South; however, the belief that there was a need to "civilize" freed Blacks assumes that they were uncivilized. "The purpose of education was to teach self-restraint, submission, sublimation. It was education to bind, not to liberate" (p. 54).

CURRICULUMS AND TEXTS USED IN 1866

The American Tract Society (ATS), a group of White Congregationalists (Butchart, 1980), was organized in 1814. Their goal was to provide a good cheap religious tract that could be distributed at no charge to people in their communities. Over the years, they published a Christian almanac for families, a tract magazine, a children's periodical, and volumes of diverse Christian materials. The Boston and New York Wings of ATS also published a series of instructional materials exclusively for freed Blacks and for use in freedmen's schools (American Tract Society, 1855). This was a set of readers, primers, and spellers modeled after mainstream texts: *The Freedmen's First Reader*, *The Freedmen's Second Reader*, *The Freedmen's Third Reader*, *The Freedmen's Primer*, *The Lincoln Primer*, and *The Freedmen's Spelling Book*. The primers and readers had pictures and stories aimed at children's experiences and imagination, but the bulk of the material spoke to the adult (Butchart, 1990). Anderson (1988) contended that these books promoted racial and economic subjugation by advocating social values

that accepted these conditions. He added that Blacks were portrayed in subordinate roles and as mentally and morally inferior. According to Butchart (1990), there was dissension about the instructional materials produced for Freedmen and those of Whites. White people questioned why Freedmen needed separate instructional materials; they believed that a separate curriculum would perpetuate caste distinctions. The ATS ignored the public's cries and continued its publications and their abolitionist mission. The use of texts like the *Freedmen's Reader* series was criticized (by the American Freedmen's Union Commission) because these readers supported the notion of a "special education" for Blacks (Butchart, 1980).

Southern American Missionary Association schools used ATS publications for Freedmen in addition to the following mainstream texts: Fetter's *Primary Arithmetic*, Wilson's *Primary Speller*, Goodrich's *Pictorial History of the United States*, McGuffey's *Reader*, Greenleaf's *Arithmetic*, Montieth's *United States History* and Webster's *Speller*. In addition to these standard texts, teachers instructed Blacks in their responsibilities to their country, family, society, and God. Many school subjects included lessons in honesty, thrift, punctuality, and religion.

In January 1864, ATS commenced publication of *The Freedman*. According to Morris (1980), the periodical was given freely to former enslaved Blacks or sold annually for 25¢. He adds that this document, like *TFT*, was to address the thirst of Blacks who desired to read magazines and newspapers. *The Freedman* sought to give adult Blacks their primary readers, lessons in geography, reading, handwriting, history, spelling, morality, temptation, prayer, the Bible, personal demeanor, sharing, temperance, domesticity, and discipline (Butchart, 1980; Morris). The children portrayed were almost always White, good, and pious. *The Freedman* was also supplied to Black children in freedmen's schools (Butchart). Butchart (1990) viewed the publication of *TFT* after *The Freedman* to be a competitive move by the African Civilization Society (ACS). On the other hand, the move to create a Black instructional newspaper could have been to counter the racial subjugation prevalent in mainstream White presses.

By 1880, the idea of universal schooling was halted by White southerners; they objected to a universal education for Whites and Blacks. According to Anderson (1988), elite Southern Whites fought for a special education for Blacks that could not be derived from the classical liberal curriculum. The content of this special education curriculum focused on manual labor and was already being developed by Samuel Armstrong at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia (Anderson). In the South, the movement toward a higher education in the classical liberal curriculum was suppressed by influential people who could only view Black folks working with their hands on the land.

BLACK CODES: THE NEW LAWS OF SUBJUGATION

The physical presence of Blacks in all aspects of White life came to be seen as an invasion, an intrusion many Whites could not accept. In the Fall of 1865 and the Winter of 1866, Black Laws also known as Black Codes were passed by the legislature of the former Confederate states during the presidency of Andrew Johnson. The Black Codes were a legislative answer to the labor problem (Foner, 1988). The provisions of the civil and legal rights relating to freed Blacks surrounded their rights as far as citizenship, property, the legal system, and family relations (i.e., marriages). Blacks had the right to protect their person and property and to have access to the courts of law (to sue or be sued). However, many of the Black Codes worked against freed Blacks and their emancipation. For example, these laws forced Blacks to establish a place of residence, find employment, marry, and fulfill work contracts. Black Codes limited Blacks' ownership of land, sought to control their morals and conduct, and safeguarded Whites from Blacks not following these laws (Foner, 1988; Litwack, 1979). The Black Codes were to replace Slave Codes.

The states that had specific Black Codes included North Carolina, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Louisiana, and Alabama. It is important to note that each state enforced

Black Codes, but some enacted their own Black Codes. For example, in Mississippi Black Codes prohibited interracial marriages and gave death sentences to any Black man who raped a White woman. Furthermore, Blacks were forced to work; those who did not possess lawful employment were considered vagrants and subsequently imprisoned or fined. The goal was to gain control over Blacks (H. A. Bullock, 1967).

After vehement protests from northern politicians about the poor wording and the continued subjugation of laws based on color, the Black Codes were never enforced and later repealed (Foner, 1988). Contrary to this point of view, Litwack (1979) contends that despite legal repeals, Black Codes remained in effect in areas where officials of the Freedmen's Bureau refused to intercede and where Blacks' protest was curtailed (Litwack). Clearly, racial discrimination continued during "freedom."

METHOD

The methodology focuses on the procedures for gathering and analyzing selected products of instructional technology (i.e., instructional materials). Then, it considers the procedures for examining the process through which designers create an instructional technology.³

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

TFT can be found on microfiche in the Freedmen's Schools and Textbooks series; it is a reprint of the American Missionary Society and is catalogued with their newspaper/textbook *The Freedman* (1861-1868). My goal through the data analysis was to discover the nature of the instructional materials. I needed to know the historical, cultural, political, social, or economic happenings during and surrounding the publication date. Therefore, the analysis began with a historical review of literature relevant to the time period (as presented in the previous section). This was followed by an overview of the product and biographies on the designers involved in

the production of the instructional materials. The last aspect in analyzing the product was a text and context analysis.

THE DESIGNERS OF *TFT*

TFT was published by the ACS “an organization officered and managed entirely by colored men” (*The Freedman’s Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 2).

The ACS was founded in 1858 with the goal of encouraging the settlement of Black missionaries in Africa. During the Civil War, 1861 to 1865, ACS reconstituted itself as a Freedmen’s aid society. The members of the organization consisted of Black ministers from churches of varied denominations (African Methodist, Episcopal, Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist). Of their members, three participated editorially in the production of *TFT*. Rufus L. Perry was the editor and Amos N. Freeman and Henry M. Wilson, the associate editors. Perry was educated for the ministry at Kalamazoo Theological Seminary in Michigan; he served as a pastor at several Baptist churches in various states. Freeman was a pastor of a Presbyterian church in New York. Wilson and Freeman were active participants in the antebellum National Negro Convention movement (Morris, 1980). The goals of ACS were self-help and pride in one’s race (Morris, 1981; Richardson, 1986).

According to Morris (1981), ACS’s philosophy of self-help emanated from the National Negro Convention movement. This was particularly evident in a transcript of the 1853 National Negro Convention held in Rochester, New York. The National Negro Convention took on a nationalistic point of view in promoting Negro self-help in the areas of business, employment, education, and publishing. During this convention, committee members on social relations delivered a report advocating that Northern Blacks develop their own educational policy. They stated,

We are more than persuaded . . . that the force of circumstances compels the regulation of schools by us to supply a deficiency produced by our condition; that it should be our aid to direct instructors, regulate books and libraries; in fine, the whole process to meet entirely our particular exigencies. (Cited in Morris, 1981, p. 118)

Morris (1981) inferred that these contentions among others contributed to the development and philosophies of the ACS. He argued that the content emphasized in *TFT*—such as morality, order, middle-class values, and forgiveness—were attributes that Freedmen already possessed. Morris further contends that the emphasis on this content was an effort to maintain a stable social environment in the post-Civil War era and that the Freedmen’s education paralleled that of Northern public schools in its curricula and instructional materials. The goal of this education, states Morris, was in “preparation for citizenship and a drastically altered place in society” (p. 212). This was a time where teachers, writers, and designers like ACS addressed the needs of Blacks. Educating freed Blacks’ was the beginning of a far-reaching educational plan.

THE PRODUCT AND ITS DESIGN

TFT was the earliest educational periodical produced by and for Blacks (P. L. Bullock, 1971); it was both a newspaper and a textbook (Morris, 1980). This newspaper/textbook was a four-page monthly with a subscription price of 50¢ per year—double the price of their rival magazine *The Freedman* (Morris, 1980). *TFT* was published once a month by the ACS in their Brooklyn, New York, office (*The Freedman’s Torchlight*, 1866/1980). Unfortunately, archivists and researchers have only found one issue in existence—Volume 1 No. 1 (P. L. Bullock, 1971; Morris).

The evidence to support *TFT* (1866/1980) as an instructional tool can be found in the document itself. The designers clearly state their objectives for Freedmen. They write that *TFT* was

devoted to the temporal and spiritual interests of the Freedmen and adapted to their present need of instruction in regard to simple truths and principles relating to their life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. It will carry to and teach them the simplest elementary principles of the English language; of moral science and political ethics; and guide them in their mental, moral, social, and political duties.

It contains the alphabet, the most simple combinations of the vowels and consonants, spelling lessons of simple words that are afterwards formed into reading lessons, and such reading matters as

directly tends to benefit the classes for whom it is intended. The Torchlight will be found suitable for beginners in day schools and families of the . . . Sabbath schools all over the country. It has two columns reserved as "Rolls of Honor"—one for males and one for females—in which the name of the best scholar in behavior and scholarship in every day and Sabbath school North and South will be registered and published as the names may be sent by the different teachers and superintendents.

This doubtless will be a stimulus to schools and awaken an interest and foster a rectitude that will prove a durable blessing. (p. 2)

TFT newspaper/textbook was designed to meet the immediate needs of Freedmen: that of enculturation. This enculturation would be from a Black perspective incorporating all that was good for Freedmen's survival in this "new" world of freedom.

TEXT ANALYSIS

Fairclough (1995) maintained that texts need an analysis that is "multisemiotic," meaning that the analysis includes photographic images, layout (the visual structure of the page), form (film, video, audiotape), and sound (p. 58). "A key issue is how these other semiotic modalities interact with language in producing meanings, and how such interactions define different aesthetics for different media" (p. 58). Moreover, I believe this type of analysis is one that is multisensory, in that the analysis of text is a visual, tactile, verbal, and auditory experience.

The approach to the text analysis is derived from an area of linguistic research called *critical discourse analysis* (CDA). The analysis of written text is the primary activity of CDA (Huckin, 1995). According to Huckin's interpretation of CDA, the text should be approached through a series of stages. First, the text should be read in an open-ended manner; the instructional materials are read through without any interpretation or analysis. This "cold" reading allows you to survey the contents and gauge how you will approach or organize the materials. In the second stage of analysis on the text level, the text is analyzed in the following areas: genre, omission and backgrounding, foregrounding, framing, and visual represen-

tations (Huckin). This inquiry provides an overview of the design of *TFT*; it is a broad or general analysis based on easily accessible information in the text.

Genre

Huckin (1995) asserts that genres represent “text types” and that these text types “manifest a characteristic set of formal features serving a characteristic purpose” (p. 98). The characteristic features of *TFT* visually represent the newspaper genre in its headings and four-column format. For example, some of the headlines read as follows: “A Colored Baptist Paper Wanted,” “Home Missionary and Educational Work,” and “A Grand Baptising Occasion.” However, a closer analysis of the headings reveals that this newspaper also contains content that may be found in an elementary curriculum. For example, some headings read as follows: “Alphabets, Spelling and Reading Lessons,” “Lesson No. 1,” and so on.

The genre of this document has been labeled as a *newspaper/textbook* by Morris (1980). Newspapers represent the news in a top-down structure where the most important articles appear first to the least important (vanDijk, 1988). However, this is not the case with *TFT*. This article is divided into sections, with each section representing a different idea or topic.

TFT appears to represent the layout of its text type (i.e., a newspaper); however, its content differs from traditional newspapers. Thereby, this document broadens the concept of traditional newspapers and the content in them. In 1866, this genre served its purpose of providing news and an elementary curriculum in the most inexpensive and fastest distribution format possible.

Framing

Another aspect of text production is what Huckin’s (1995) terms *framing*: how the content of the text is presented. The presentation of the content could have an angle or a slant. The slant of *TFT* was its status as a newspaper/textbook that was written by and for Black people. Throughout this document, ACS pointed out that they were Black people who were devoted to improving the education and

future of Freedmen. On page 2 column 1, in the section titled "The African Civilization Society," they write, "This society is officered and managed entirely by colored men"; and on page 3 in "An Appeal," they open with "The African Civilization Society is an organization of pious and educated Colored people who believe, and always have believed, that the Black man of education can best instruct, direct, and elevate his race." This frame set *TFT* apart from other newspapers and instructional materials.

Omission and Backgrounding

Given the brevity of this newspaper/textbook, undoubtedly many topics and issues were omitted. Therefore, I will examine omission as the best form of backgrounding (Huckin, 1995) because what lays in the background is what has been intentionally or unintentionally omitted.

Considering the information in *TFT* what was omitted or what laid in the background of this document were the true feelings or motives of the designers (editors). Were they angry about the plight of Freedmen? Were they frustrated about their inability to touch the lives of more Freedmen? Did they feel that *TFT* was a sufficient tool to educate Freedmen? The treatment of African Americans during slavery and the Civil War was an atrocity in history and in the lives of these people. The designers of *TFT*, however, espoused benevolence and morality as opposed to retaliation. For example the titles of some of the sections read, "The Way to Be Happy," "Amusements and Religion," "The Amiable Little Girl and Good Boy," "Maxims to Guide a Young Man," and "Hitherto the Lord Hath Helped Us."

Foregrounding

Foregrounding means to emphasize specific concepts and de-emphasize other concepts. In particular, those things in the foreground may receive textual distinction (Huckin, 1995). In *TFT*, the concepts emphasized were the elementary curriculum. These instructional lessons were placed on the first, third, and fourth pages. The academic lessons were the first items presented to the

reader, and they were emphasized in a variety of typefaces (bold, script, print) and sizes (14 points or larger). The majority of these lessons appeared on the front and back pages of the newspaper/textbook. This is an important layout strategy because the front and back pages may be read first before opening a newspaper. This may also speak to the designers' goals of emphasizing this document as first an instructional paper and second a newspaper. The designers placed newsworthy articles on the interior pages and used the rest as fillers on the fourth page. The strategic placement of articles was not necessarily to de-emphasize news as unimportant but to emphasize that being able to read the news was more important than the news itself.

Visual Representations

Visual representations assist in the framing of text (Huckin, 1995). In the context of this newspaper/textbook format, graphics, and written text collectively form the layout of the newspaper (Kress & vanLeeuwen, 1996). For example, *TFT*'s first page carries its name in capital bold letters. In the middle of the words, *Freedman's* and *Torchlight* is the Great Seal of the United States. An open-winged eagle sits in the middle of the seal, a flag of the United States in the rear, and below on a strip of ribbon reads "*E Pluribus Unum*" meaning "Out of Many, One." This symbol was selected by Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson on the fourth of July 1776. This motto was to represent the union of the 13 original states. A version of the Great Seal was also printed on the back of U.S. currency. For the designers of *TFT*, the Great Seal may have symbolized freedom of mind and body and citizenship.

An example of how the visual qualities of the written text assist in the framing of the text is exemplified in the textbook sections of *TFT*. The textbook sections of the newspaper are interspersed throughout the paper, but as already noted, the majority is displayed on the front and back pages. The designers used a variety of type sizes to emphasize a word or letter. For example, on the front page, the capital letters of the alphabet are in large typeface and dark bold

print. The lowercase letters are in a smaller bold print. The letters of the alphabet are also written in script below the printed version. I believe that the variation in print would prepare freed Blacks to read and write in print and script. Below the alphabet written in script are phonetic pronunciations in a large bolder typeface (i.e., ba, be, bi, bo, bu, by). The spelling and reading lessons are in the same typeface as the rest of the document. The only other section written in a script typeface is a prayer titled "Looking to God." Italics were frequently used to emphasize a word or phrase. Throughout the document, headings and text are used in a combination of lowercase and uppercase letters.

The visual representations in this document took on the form of written text and graphics. It is evident that visual representations aided in emphasizing what the designers thought were important, and in this case, it was the elementary curriculum.

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

The last stage in approaching the text involves analyzing the context, on a micro level, to identify the social, political (vanDijk, 1993), cultural, or economic occurrences within the text. This section parallels macro issues as represented in society with micro issues as represented in the context of the instructional materials. This analysis is consistent with the aims of CDA, that is, to provide a

systematic theoretical and descriptive account of (a) the structures and strategies, at various levels, of written and spoken discourse, seen both as a textual "object" and as a form of sociocultural practice and interaction, and (b) the relationships of these properties of text and talk with the relevant structures of their cognitive, social, cultural, and historical "contexts." (vanDijk, 1993, p. 96)

In sum, this is the study of "text in context" (vanDijk, 1993, p. 96). The context analysis seeks to demonstrate the social, political, cultural, or economic contexts within the instructional materials.

As a microcosm of the community, *TFT* is thereby a reflection of the community and can be viewed as a living document of 1866. By

living document, I mean that you can see, hear, and feel, the events evident in this document as if they were happening before your eyes, heard as a story, or felt as an emotion. Through *TFT*, the designers and their perceptions of reality are relived.

Designers for the People

TFT is an example of a product produced by a group of people who chose to support Black people and Black progress. It exemplifies how a community of people gathered their resources and formed their own world within the world. Thereby, this document sought to construct a community of designers and learners by advocating the tools to accomplish those goals. The ACS believed themselves to be

an organization of pious and educated Colored people who believe, and always have believed, that the black man of education can best instruct, direct, and elevate his race. We have come together in an organized and incorporated body, commenced the work of self-elevation and are now successfully carrying on the work of education among the Freed people of the South. The history of civilization testifies that the most homogeneous instrumentalities are the most effectual in accelerating a people's elevation. The parent is the best person to lead and teach his own child, and fit it for the duties and responsibilities of mature age; and if the child be orphan, it is generally conceded that the nearest relative is the fittest guardian. This rule holds good when applied to races. Hence we have concluded that the black man is the better leader and teacher among his own people than the white man; that while we can do this work just as well, we can do it under fewer disadvantages and far less expense than he. We already have several flourishing schools in the South, taught by efficient Colored teachers and doing incalculable good. (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 3)

The designers believed that because they were educated and godly Black men, they were the better people to “instruct, direct, and elevate” their people. They concluded that based on their education and religious status that they could best provide academic and religious content, that was “good” for Freedmen. The Black elite should assist in the education of the Black masses. ACS

believed that they as Black people could best nurture Freedmen based solely on their racial and cultural identification. They gathered, in what we now call a think tank, to brainstorm the best way to educate and support the needs of Freedmen. They knew that the future of their people, their existence, relied on the elevation of nearly 4 million tattered souls. If Black people were to gain in social, political, and economic status, they needed leaders who had their interests at heart. ACS foresaw the future and wanted to guide the direction of Freedmen. They believed that their racial and cultural identification assisted in the transference of knowledge and that this racial identification assisted in self-elevation, self-identification, and ultimately self-empowerment.

This concept of tying one's racial and cultural heritage to one's learning was and is still an innovative instructional strategy. One's blood relative, ACS hypothesized, could best prepare a Black child for a White world. A Black child can best learn about his identity, culture, race, and how his people are viewed in the American society from one of his own. This environmental race based thinking is good for all races, said ACS. Therefore, they concluded that the Black man, versus the White man, can best lead and teach their own people. The Black man can educate his people with equal skill and less money and can offer a positive enculturation. ACS organized and financed their own schools, hired teachers, and purchased supplies as proof of their convictions. They demonstrated to themselves and others that they were active participants in the education of freed Blacks. *TFT* is a living document of their efforts as designers, producers, and participants in the education of freed Blacks.

The Sociopolitical and Economic Occurrences in *TFT*

TFT, a historical record of the sociopolitical and economic occurrences of 1866, promoted the acquisition of knowledge and empowerment through academic lessons, sociopolitical actions, financial stability, and religious instruction. These areas tie into the ultimate goal of freed Blacks, freedom. Moreover, they reveal how the context is mediated by macro sociopolitical and economic occurrences.

Academic lessons. The context of the academic lessons reveals a curriculum contrary to that produced in Freedmen's schools, in that the Freedmen's school curriculum contained content that ridiculed Blacks. The academic lessons with the Christian slant offered its readers self-empowerment, elevation, and identification. The curriculum was not vocational or agricultural, thereby implying that freed Blacks should just seek manual labor positions. The designers of *TFT* offered a classical elementary curriculum conducive to progressing forward in this line of study.

TFT was an instructional tool whose content sought to uplift Freedmen. The lessons covered in *TFT* included the following subject areas: alphabets, handwriting, phonics, spelling, sentence structure, reading, Christianity (i.e., man, God, Adam, Eve, the bible), and the elementary curriculum (i.e., arithmetic, geography, history, grammar [nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, syntax, prosody], hours, days, weeks, months, land and water, The United States, presidents of the United States, orthography, vowels, consonants, words, and etymology). *TFT* also contained a set of questions for self-assessment of the materials in this issue (e.g., How many letters does the English alphabet contain, and what are they? What is geography? How many presidents of the United States have we had? Name their order of service. How many states are in the Union?) (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 3). In *TFT*, Freedmen had access to the basics of the elementary school curriculum. Mastering this curriculum could give Freedmen the reading and writing basics to daily survival.

Embodied in the spelling and reading Lessons 3, 4, and 5 are ACS's political agenda of self-elevation. In Spelling Lesson 3, the words are listed as follows:

free	life	live	lives	took	love
love	man	now	will	thank	God
work	hard	good	house		
right	learn	land	made	free	slaves
stand	God	should	ought	serve	read
stand	union	ever	now	and	

SOURCE: *The Freedman's Torchlight* (1866/1980, Lesson 3, p. 1).

These words support ACS's contentions and reaffirms the life that Freedmen will finally embrace, which was denied under slavery. "Now" Freedmen are "free" to "live," "love," "read," "work," and "serve" themselves. "Thank" "God." By learning these words, the learner could begin to read sentences, paragraphs, and eventually pages of text. The previous example demonstrates the instructional strategy of learning a word in isolation; the next examples demonstrate reading in context. The designer's Christian ideologies for freed Blacks are also included in the text:

I am free and well. I will love God and thank him for it. and I must work hard and be good and get me a house and lot. (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, Lesson 4, p. 1)

God made all men free. Then we should not be slaves to sin nor man. But we ought to love God and serve him. We should learn to read and write and be good. We will stand up for the Union, now and for ever. (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, Lesson 5, p. 1)

These sentences are designed to teach Freedmen to read, but they also have many underlying implications. Freedmen could interpret these words to mean that they should use their newfound freedom by taking advantage of the opportunities before them. Their freedom and health are all that was needed. Freedmen must love God and thank him for their many blessings (freedom, health, life). Freedmen must behave, find industry (work), and labor hard to someday own land and a home, and eventually, Freedmen will achieve the American dream of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These ideas challenge those laws of subjugation implemented under the Black Codes.

God sees no difference in men; we are all equal in his eyes. God has always loved and supported Freedmen, and Freedmen should return God's love. Freedmen were never meant to be captives of man nor of sin. This was not God's will. We must again love and serve God, educate ourselves, and control our behavior. God will always be with us as we face our freedom. The last sentence, "We will stand up for the union, now and forever," indicates the support that freed Blacks should have for the Union, the Union that fought for their freedom.

The use of repetition of ideas and words is a basic pedagogical strategy and frequents some instructional materials. Continued repetition helps people remember, and memorization strategies are basic to an elementary education. The designers saw repetition as an instructional strategy conducive to the medium available (i.e., a newspaper).

Sociopolitical actions. The sociopolitical actions exhibited in the text address not only ACS's Christian and self-empowering agenda, but they paint a picture of post-Civil War emancipation as viewed by the government and freed Blacks. The elusiveness of freedom is apparent as the government and ACS search to comprehend this thing called freedom. For the government, it meant continued subjugation through a new set of laws: The Black Codes, and individual states implemented their own institutionalized discrimination practices. For freed Blacks, freedom meant imprisonment under a similar system of subjugation as that implemented during slavery. ACS, however, saw freedom as an opportunity for self-elevation, self-identification, and self-empowerment. The text reveals that ACS's goals for Freedmen included changing individuals' mindset; emancipation of the mind is where they would begin. However, it must be understood that ACS saw conforming versus resisting (Fordham, 1996) the laws of the dominant culture to benefit freed Blacks.

For example, ACS hoped to influence freed Blacks into accepting the messages exhibited in the poem titled "The way to be happy" (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 3):

- 1 How pleasant it is, at the close of the day;
- 2 No follies to have to repent;
- 3 But reflect on the past and be able to say,
- 4 That my time has been properly spent.
- 5 When I have done all my business with patience and care,
- 6 And been good, and obliging and kind,
- 7 I lie on my pillow and sleep away there,
- 8 With a happy and satisfied mind,
- 9 But instead of all this, when it must be confess'd,
- 10 That I careless and idle have been,
- 11 I lie down as usual, and go to my rest,

12 But feel discontented within.
 13 Now, as I don't like all the trouble I've had,
 14 In future, I'll try to prevent it;
 15 Since I never am naughty, without being sad,
 16 Nor good, without being contented

In this poem, lines 1 and 2 support the idea of behaving well so that you do not have to repent, probably to God, for misbehaving. If you have a good day, you can say that your day went well (lines 3 and 4), that you were tolerant, and did not behave poorly. Freedmen must be well behaved and good.

In line 7, the poem assumes that good behavior will yield a clear conscience and a restful sleep. Lines 1 through 8 imply that "The way to be happy" is to ignore the injustices of the day or in society. However, lines 9 through 12 reveal the essence of the poem. It reads, "But instead of all this, when it must be confess'd, That I careless and idle have been, I lie down as usual, and go to my rest, But feel discontented within." The truth is that the characters (freed Blacks) do not care about being "good;" this is a behavior forced on them their whole lives. To be good was not an option; it was legally mandated by the Black Codes and its predecessor the slave codes. Unlawful behavior would result in jail or a fine as defined by the Black Codes in individual states. Although the Black Codes were legally repealed, discrimination continued, and Black Codes were eventually replaced by Jim Crow⁴ laws.

The character does not know what to do, and when he rests, he is terribly unhappy inside. His unhappiness is hidden as he works in the day, and because he does not like trouble he will not make trouble about the injustices before him. In fact, he will try to avoid all trouble (lines 13 and 14). In lines 15 and 16, "Since I never am naughty, without being sad, Nor good, without being contented," the character realizes that the best way to be happy is to continue living a conforming life. You will not challenge the dominant culture or there will be consequences (i.e., jailed, sued, or fined).

This poem indicates that ACS and freed Blacks were bound by law but mostly by their own psychological limitations of what free-

dom meant. Although freedom of body had been provisionally granted, freedom of mind would take many *Roads To Travel*.

Financial stability. The text revealed the designer's financial plan; it illustrated how they were ill prepared and under financed for taking on this publication. ACS promoted the idea of economic stability; however, in their first issue, they were already financially unstable. Although ACS's plan was well intentioned, they did not examine the factors that impinged on production, distribution, and consumption of their product. *TFT* was financially doomed from the start.

Throughout *TFT*, the designers provide instances of economic progress. This progress is demonstrated through the possession of land, property (i.e., schools), and employment. For example, a column is devoted to documenting Home Missionary and Educational Work. Listed is the American Home Missionary Society whose yearly report is summarized in terms of church business and church service. The church business accounted for the number of missionaries and teachers employed, children in Sabbath schools, scholars in day schools, and additional parishioners. The service that the church provided to the community included the following: service sermons, family visits, prayer and conference meetings, baptisms, and the building of homes. The American Missionary Association reported their educational progress in terms of the number of teachers and preachers employed and the number of pupils instructed. The ACS listed their accomplishments including the number of Colored persons employed, scholars in day schools, scholars in Sabbath school, bibles and testaments distributed, and copies made of other books. The American Freedmen's Union Commission and Reverend J. W. Alvord reported on the number of teachers employed, schools in operation, and pupils served. The ACS believed that this work exemplified the progress of Freedmen through the guidance of God. They write,

Now let preacher and people and teacher and pupil, thank God for what has been accomplished in this important field of labor and still

preach, pray and give and teach and study with an eye single to the glory of God, and the blessings that must result in such labor, gifts and study. (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 2)

By reporting ACS's financial status, the designers may have hoped to illustrate to Freedmen that economic progress was possible. Schools were built to educate Freedmen. Teachers were hired. Freedmen could hopefully feel empowered to move forward along this same road or provide a path for their children. Moreover, the list of missionary support documents the help of benevolent Whites in educating, feeding, and clothing Freedmen.

Another financial factor that must be pointed out was ACS's lack of long-term financial support. In *TFT*, there were notices about their financial situation. The first section lists the cost of the newspaper, as this is typical of most newspapers. However, they add "payment always in advance." In the section of *TFT* titled, "An Appeal," ACS appeals to its readers knowing that without funding, they cannot sustain their valiant efforts to help Freedmen become self-empowered and academically educated. "We ourselves must elevate our own race to the status of self-reliance, the fundamental element of which is Education" (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 3). The appeal further reads as follows:

Of whatever else we may be ignorant and in whatever else we may be 'inferior' as Negroes, we claim with due modesty to be learned and 'superior' in a knowledge of the wants of our own race; and the fittest persons to have the management as far as possible of interests carried on for our temporal prosperity. We have brain sufficient for the management of such interests, but the pecuniary means we have not, and in order to be aided in this respect we make and send forth this appeal. We send it to all who desire to see us (though physically dissimilar as we are) . . . well fitted *intellectually*, as we are by our well tested loyalty to be useful citizens of the United States. The fitness we require is a mechanical and mercantile education, as well as that afforded by our schools. This we are giving to all under our immediate instruction, on a large practical scale; which indeed is a new page in the history of our race in America. (*The Freedman's Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 3)

Several points are apparent from this appeal. First ACS, plays into the dominant society stereotyped assumption that the Black man is inferior (in all ways). Given this assumption, they acknowledge their presumed inferiority and then affirm that despite their shortcomings, they know what is best for their race. The designers saw themselves as leaders given their education, status as free Northern men, and their means to publish. They felt they had the expertise to guide freed Blacks and needed to guide them for their “temporal prosperity” (*The Freedman’s Torchlight*, 1866/1980, p. 3). However, financially they did not have the wherewithal. The designers’ message went out to all who read their paper—Blacks and Whites. ACS argued that Blacks were “fitted intellectually” and loyal to the United States. The monies they needed to sustain themselves would run their educational enterprises and provide industrial and vocational training to others. (This appeal addressed industrial and vocational training; however, I believe ACS sought a classical curriculum for some if not all freed Blacks because it matched the curriculum taught to elite groups of Whites.) In the last line, ACS states, “This [meaning *TFT*] we are giving to all under our immediate instruction, on a large practical scale.” This statement assured benefactors that Freedmen would be the readers of this text and that financial support would aid freed Black’s education and continued emancipation. Moreover, ACS’s desire for financial support stems from their awareness that some people (White and Black) did not want desegregated schools and that some White people preferred that Blacks not be educated at all or have their own schools in which to do so. Thereby, Blacks and Whites who supported segregation might also support ACS’s financial endeavors.

Religious instruction. The text consistently made references to the tenets of Christianity and encouraged freed Blacks to have faith. This repetitious strategy may have been effective for Freedmen who had lost hope in God, society, and themselves.

TFT’s many religious messages suggest that ACS thought that Freedmen needed more than hope to get them through this transitional period. They needed faith in a power much greater than man; they needed a God. In the instructional lessons, there were prayers

and definitions of God. Throughout the document, God was used as a guiding force that could help Freedmen in every aspect of their lives. ACS espoused the belief that through the Christian faith all was possible.

FINDINGS

TFT is a microcosm of the social, political, cultural, and economic happenings in the United States in 1866. As an instructional text, *TFT* exemplifies what was necessary for educating freed men, women, and children. The text analysis revealed that the designers used the available media or technology (i.e., newspapers) to disseminate their message. *TFT* was written by and for Black people, with a focus on religion. The designers omitted, or backgrounded, their true feelings about the plight of freed Blacks journey toward emancipation. *TFT* emphasized its academic lessons and de-emphasized its news content. The visual representations of symbols and written text emphasized the designer's focus on an elementary curriculum. The context analysis revealed a focus on self-help, racial pride and support, self-determination, self-elevation, self-identification, self-empowerment, and racial and cultural identification. The academic lessons incorporated Christianity, a classical elementary curriculum, pedagogical strategies (repetition of ideas and words), academic achievement, and reading attainment. The sociopolitical actions in *TFT* espoused the concepts of freedom of mind, assimilating into the dominant culture, literature (poetry) and racial empowerment. The economic occurrences in *TFT* promoted the idea of economic stability and Black economic progress. It also demonstrated that the designers were financially underprepared for this long-term publishing project. The religious instruction in *TFT* focused on faith, Christianity, and the repetition of Christian tenets.

The text and context analysis revealed that the designers instilled many elements in the design of *TFT* that are culturally and racially specific. These elements reveal the nature of this instructional technology and act as a model for similar instructional designs.

CONCLUSION

TFT sought to guide freed Blacks who came in contact with their newspaper/textbook. Distribution was of course minimal, but like the “grapevine telegraph,” knowledge would domino through the African American community until everyone knew about reading and writing. *TFT* assisted in sparking the fire of knowledge through men, women, and children, thereby emancipating information—setting loose the secrets to written literacy.

The contributions of African Americans to the development of instructional materials must be documented and explored further. To ignore their contributions in this area is to again admit that the history of African Americans is “not regarded as history” (Wesley, 1973, p. ix).

It is important to note that the sense of autonomy desired by African Americans, then and now, is a search to find one’s culture, one’s identity. It is an exploration inside and out—to heal all that was lost, to mourn those who died or were murdered, and to regenerate from hundreds of years of oppression. How can one expect people who have suffered all to now embrace a system without reservation? It is only natural to withdraw from pain. The enslavement of African peoples—mind and body, then and now, is an eternal sprouting wound.

NOTES

1. An extensive analysis of *The Freedman’s Torchlight* can be found in Young (1999).
2. The term *freed Blacks* will be used throughout this study as a general term to represent freed men, women, and children. When the literature has specified the gender or maturation of a person, it will be indicated.
3. Within this study, instructional technologies are those products that incorporate instructional content and tool(s) of technology (e.g., film, television, videotape, typewriter, printing press, writing instruments, computers, audiotape, radio, etc.) for the purpose of instruction. The products produced from these instructional technologies are more com-

monly referred to as instructional materials; thereby, instructional materials are products of instructional technology.

4. Jim Crow is the systematic practice of segregating and controlling Black people.

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