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## And finally ... look back to move forward

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Simonson

About a decade ago, Information Age Publishing, the publisher of this journal, collected classic books published after Second World War in the field of audio-visual education. It was hoped that these nearly forgotten publications could be used by educators to rekindle the emphasis of the 1940s and 1950s to modernize education – to use the technology-driven lessons learned during the war to improve teaching and learning.

Twain wrote “*Classic*,” a book which people praise and don’t read.

Five themes emerged in education in the 1950s from what then was called the audio-visual education movement. These themes are:

First, *visual literacy* - the need to visualize teaching became important. In the 1950s, the visual literacy movement increased in popularity, the United States Visual Literacy Association was begun, and machines capable of applying principles of programmed instruction were popular.

Second, *systems theory* - the theory of systems was promoted. Educators who were trained in the military realized that clear planning beginning with behavioral objectives were necessary – a major principle of systems theory was that learning should be observable.

Third, *science ruled* - there was a value ascribed to what science could do. Many assumed that the processes used to win a global war could be applied to how to educate children. Science was expected to clearly demonstrate that audio and video teaching was effective.

Fourth, *technology*, the use of tools purposefully, was thought to be important to education. Machines were considered good. Teaching machines were welcomed by educators and students and were widely used.

Finally, *media centers* - the transformation of the school library into a learning resource center and learning laboratory was widespread. The technology-rich media center was central to the modern school of the 1960s.

Pamphlets, monographs, yearbooks and textbooks that reflect these themes were published, and Information Age Publishing has reprinted them, often with explanatory forewords.

Distance educators should have these five on their bookshelves.

- (1) The Department of Audio-Visual Instruction of the National Education Association’s guidebook series titled:

*Planning Schools for Use of Audio-Visual Materials*

- No 1 Classrooms
- No 2 Auditoriums
- No 3 AV Instructional Materials Center



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(2) Weaver and Bollinger's textbook named - *Visual Aids*

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(3) Wittich and Fowlkes' reference book - *Audio-Visual Paths to Learning*

(4) Noel and Leonard's textbook with the title - *Foundations for Teacher Education in Audio-Visual Instruction*

(5) National Society for the Study of Education Forty-Eighth Yearbook - *Audio-visual Materials of Instruction*

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These five publications represent the literature promoting a reformation of schools and modernization of education after Second World War.

Educators might consider exploring these classic documents to see how they relate to the modern challenges of distance education.

And finally, these publications are worth a review, a reading and reflection, because:

When you re-read a classic you do not see more in the book than you did before; you see more in you than you did before! (Fadiman, 1957).

### References

Fadiman, C. (1957). *Any Number Can Play*. The World Publishing Company.