

Building a Global Community In a Virtual World

INNOVATIVE LEARNING EVENT
CREATES MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS
FOR ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION

“
People are talking
about us all over
the world.”

Elizabeth Hoover, Ph.D.
President, Aphasia Access

THE TEACH-IN MODEL

Flexible and
uncomplicated
planning process

Illustrates power
in bringing
people together

Brings multiple
benefits to an
organization,
including
building
community and
collecting quality
content

Extremely
inexpensive
way to bring
international
recognition to an
organization

Aphasia Access is the nation's largest aphasia awareness advocacy organization, committed to support anyone on the front lines of aphasia care as well as to breaking down the communication access barriers prevalent in our health care systems and the greater community. June is National Aphasia Awareness Month, and in the challenging times of 2020, TVDA led Aphasia Access to embrace an innovative approach: a 24-hour global teach-in.

The 2020 teach-in took a page from history: the iconic teach-ins of the 1960s, which brought together campus communities to engage and build awareness in social and political topics. Aphasia Access' goals were to bring its community together during the Covid-19 pandemic and expand knowledge sharing on a international level. The novel teach-in moved away from a formal conference approach, relying on crowd-sourced presentations from participants across the globe. Aphasia Access coordinated with international partners to curate two-hour time blocks, making it a truly worldwide affair (and taking some stress off the planning committee).

At 11 am on June 24, Aphasia Access President Elizabeth Hoover welcomed the teach-in participants, kicking off a series of 58 presentations with 74 participants in seven countries. Hundreds of viewers from ten countries tuned in on live streams on the organization's website and Facebook page. Not only was the audience engaged with Q&A sessions and live chats, more informal connections occurred, including an international comparison of coffee mugs.

All the sessions were recorded, providing the organization with 24-hours worth of curated, informational content, something that normally would take years to obtain. The teach-in elevated Aphasia Access' reputation as a global convener of voices and resources for the aphasia community.

THE TAKE-AWAY

By staying authentic to its purpose, Aphasia Access and TVDA showed how meaningful connections could be created in a virtual environment and showcase the collective power of the worldwide community around those living with aphasia.