



VITAL ANAESTHESIA SIMULATION TRAINING

VAST Facilitator Course and VAST

Course Whitehorse, YT, Canada

28 November – 1 December 2019

Dr Patty Livingston



Executive summary

Situation

The VAST Facilitator Course and VAST Course were offered for the first time in Whitehorse, YT, Canada for interprofessional health care providers.

Background

The VAST Course was initially piloted in January 2018 in Rwanda. Since then, the course has been run 15 times in a variety of countries, including Canada, Fiji, India, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. VAST uses low-cost, portable materials to create vivid, immersive simulation training for interprofessional teams. Using clinical challenges that are common worldwide, the course enhances non-technical skills (e.g., task management, situation awareness, communication skills) for a coordinated team response. Having been delivered previously in Prince George, BC, this was the initial VAST Course for the Yukon Territory. An abbreviated 2-day VAST Course was preceded by the 2-day VAST Facilitator Course (FC) to train four Whitehorse-based nurses and one anesthesia resident from Dalhousie University. Graduates of the FC were then mentored as trainee facilitators to apply new skills during the VAST Course that immediately followed.

Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) is the referral centre for the Yukon Territory, serving a large geographical area that faces challenges of a low-density population and requirements to transport highly complex patients to Southern Canada. Fulltime surgical services include general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedics, with visiting services from ENT and ophthalmology. There are 8 anesthesia providers. Currently there is a nursing shortage, with travel nurses required, at times. The ICU has capacity for 4 patients. The perioperative team has the advantages of familiarity and well-practiced routines but nevertheless faces management of rare but serious cases, visiting staff not accustomed to practice patterns, and few opportunities for interprofessional training in non-technical skills. Participants in the Whitehorse VAST Course included 7 nurses, 6 GPAs, one general surgeon and one obstetrician gynecologist. The course was supported by Dr Kathleen Dalinghaus (local course director), 6 volunteer visiting facilitators, and 5 trainee facilitators.

Assessment

The VAST Course was well-received and considered to be an excellent fit for Whitehorse. Participants valued interprofessional training, learning along with colleagues, the focus on non-technical skills, and the rich discussions during debriefing sessions (See Appendices 2 and 3).

A list of tangible action items to improve perioperative care was generated during the course. A lead person was assigned to follow up on these action items.

Recommendations

Plans are underway for newly trained facilitators to offer the course in other locations in Yukon as well as possibly in northern British Columbia and other locations in northern Canada.

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Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the:

- The staff of the Whitehorse General Hospital
- Department of Anesthesia, Pain Management and Perioperative Medicine, Dalhousie University

Attendees

Facilitators	
Jon Bailey	Anesthesiologist
Julian Barnbrook	Anesthesiologist
Kathleen Dalinghaus	Anesthesiologist and local course director
Patty Livingston	Anesthesiologist
Stephen Middleton	Anesthesia resident
Adam Mossenson	Anesthesiologist
Sara Whynot	Simulation coordinator

Trainee facilitators	
Kathleen Chapman	OR nurse
Denica Christianson	OR nurse (acting OR manager)
Sarah Harrison	Clinical nurse educator
Emma Kehoe	Anesthesia resident
Dave Waldren	OR nurse

Participants	
Sam Bidaman	PACU nurse
Emilie Bousquet	GP Anesthetist
Andrea Cook	PACU nurse
Travis Flath	GP Anesthetist
Claire Hills	Clinical nurse educator (Sun.)
Felicia Huang	General surgeon (Sat.)
Charles Kalinsky	PACU nurse
Leanne Kinvig	OR nurse
Alex Kmet	GP Anesthetist
Jennifer Labuguen	OR nurse
Adrienne Mayes	GP Anesthetist
Joanne Pare	Clinical nurse educator (Sat.)
Ross Phillips	GP Anesthetist
Sarah Saunders	Obstetrician (Sun.)
Phil Urness	GP Anesthetist

Venue and equipment

The course was held in four rooms at Whitehorse General Hospital. The newly opened simulation centre was used for facilitator training and one of the two simulation stations during the course. Debriefings for this station happened in a corner of the hospital cafeteria. The second simulation workstation was set up in conference room with debriefings and common sessions held in the First Nations Boardroom. All printed resources, including scenario documents, were provided by the team from Dalhousie University. These materials will remain at WGH for running future courses in Whitehorse and other parts of the Yukon Territory. The remaining equipment was already available from the simulation lab at WGH. Dr Kathleen Dalinghaus kindly loaned two iOS devices for running the

SimMon app to simulate patient monitoring. The other two iOS devices were loaned from the Dalhousie team.

Sessions

A course timetable is provided in Appendix I. The course is normally 3-days but it worked well as a 2-day course in this context. Sessions on clinical content were omitted, as were several scenarios.

The one addition to this course, never done before, was to keep a running list of action items for practice improvements in the workplace. Near the end of the course, the group discussed these actions and leads were identified to follow up.

Challenges and lessons learnt

There were few challenges in offering these courses in Whitehorse. The venue worked well. Dr Kathleen Dalinghaus did an admirable job of arranging participants. We are grateful to the Whitehorse General Hospital for giving staff permission to attend. Course participants were fully engaged.

The most significant lesson is that VAST is appreciated and relevant in this context.

Future directions

1. Plan for VAST Course delivery in other locations in YT, such as Dawson City
2. Explore potential for offering VAST in other locations in northern Canada
3. Continue ongoing mentorship of trainee facilitators, including invitation to attend the VAST Instructor Course in November 2020 in Halifax

Appendix 1 – Timetable

VAST Course – Day 1

Time	Code	Format	Session
0800-0815			Registration
0815-0830	1.1	Discussion	Welcome and overview
0830-0900	1.2	Discussion	Introduction to simulation
0900-0930	1.3	Demo	Demonstration scenario and orientation to workspace
0930-1015	1.5	Discussion	Non-technical skills
1015-1035			Morning tea
1035-1115	1.6	Scenario	Emergency preoperative assessment
1115-1145	1.8	Discussion	Unanticipated difficult intubation
1145-1230	1.9	Scenario	Rapid sequence induction
1230-1315			Lunch
1315-1400	3.6	Scenario	Trauma - motorbike accident
1400-1430	3.7	Scenario	Trauma - reassessment
1430- 1500			Afternoon tea
1500-1600	3.5	Scenario	Trauma – pediatric burns

VAST Course – Day 2

Time	Code	Format	Session
0800-0830		Discussion	Reflection on Day 1
0830-0915	2.2	Scenario	Obstetric preoperative assessment
0915-1015	2.3	Scenario	C-section under spinal
1015-1030			Morning tea
1030-1115	2.4	Scenario	Induction of general anesthesia for C-section
1115-1200	2.5	Scenario	Intra-partum haemorrhage on the ward
1200-1245			Lunch
1245-1300	2.8	Scenario	Morning handover in recovery
1330-1430			Final reflection and commitment to change

Appendix 2 – Facilitator Course evaluations

List three things you liked about the course:

- *"Excellent instructors, loads of support; realistic scenarios; large amount of discussion about the process"*
- *"Very safe space to learn; Great overview on how to debrief; Good practice running uncommon high stress scenarios"*
- *"1. Emphasis was placed on practicing and learning non-technical skills; 2. Learning was immensely useful and applicable to my practice; 3. I felt empowered, and my ability to address issues and difficult learning has improved VASTly :)"*

What suggestions do you have for improvement?

- *"more opportunities to do the hard part of simulation - the debriefing more time to delve deeper"*
- *"Perhaps slightly less interruptions during the debrief. Although the points made were very helpful, I some times felt as though the debriefer was going to get to the point"*
- *"Integration of nursing centered lead roles would be valuable for interdisciplinary collaboration."*

What are the three most important messages you will take away from the course:

- *"stay engaged in learning and improving yourself; effective clear communication across all levels; creating a safe learning environment is crucial for group buy in"*
- *"Debriefing is very challenging and takes a lot of practice; Knowing the scenarios very well is crucial to running a successful course; So important to create a non judgemental space so you don't scare participants off!"*
- *"1. The value of strong non-technical skills to facilitate optimal team functioning ;
2. Awkward silence is a great strategy to get people talking; 3. Debriefing can generate ideas for positive change, but is also a controllable process, so people explore learning objectives that you want them to identify"*

Any other comments?

- *"amazing job, I hope there will be more VAST courses offered in the Yukon."*
- *"This course was truly a wonderful experience. I was challenged in a skill set I didn't know I had, and by the end of the course I was left feeling inspired. On Wednesday I will be facilitating a debrief with my staff on a difficult topic, and this process will hopefully help solve a long standing issue within my department. Thank you all so much for your teaching and support! I especially appreciated the mentorship and feedback provided by Adam."*

Appendix 3 – VAST Course evaluations

List three things you liked about the course:

- *"Like the scenarios; Enjoyed feedback; After scenarios learned things"*
- *"the use of low fidelity simulation as an effective learning environment; the inter-professional team involvement in the scenarios; the friendly and supportive facilitators and their patient supportive approach in mentoring new facilitators"*
- *"small group"*
- *"The fact that this course came to our location meant that we could work as our usual OR team which is very valuable for improving team function and dynamics; Good scenarios, realistic; Liked the group debriefs."*

What suggestions do you have for improvement?

- *"no idea at present"*
- *"a mix of low fidelity and high fidelity simulations; more information prior to the course about participants expectations"*

What are the three most important messages you will take away from the course:

- *"Communication important bit just technical know how; Closed loop communication; Teamwork is important"*
- *"clear communication is the key to effective teamwork; verbalize the plan to the entire team; recognize, assess and escalate early"*
- *"Being more vocal about what I am thinking to improve the team's ability to anticipate needs. Not delegating too many tasks at once to a single person. Use of cognitive aids."*

Any other comments?

- *"thank you! you were all wonderful!"*
- *"Great course! Good number of scenarios to go through, all very different."*

Appendix 4 – Course Photos





