Return on Language Learning: Measuring the quantitative and qualitative impact of language learning

Prepared for: The Metropolitan Police Service

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Abstract Summary

This abstract provides an overview of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) language-learning initiative that began in 2010. A summary of the programme and the programme objectives are provided. The primary focus of the report is to quantify the impact to the MPS of this programme which is estimated at a Return on Language Learning of 35%. A discussion of the intrinsic value associated with the programme is provided as well as results from a learner survey indicating qualitative value.

Programme Summary

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) introduced a centralised language-training programme for the first time in 2010 as part of a wider review of the way linguistic support services are delivered to serve the multilingual and multicultural communities of the city of London.

In addition to a programme of change aimed at increasing service effectiveness and cost management, the MPS wanted to expand in-house language capability through the improved capture, development, and accreditation of existing officer and staff language skills. A new programme of language training was planned to deliver initial-level learning and a route to skills improvement at higher levels, where language gaps were identified.

At the programme planning stage, the MPS researched different ways of delivering flexible training within a realistic and cost-effective budget, with a view to training large numbers of front-line officers supporting communities across a wide range of London boroughs and departments. A combination of tutor-led courses and self-study in a blended-learning mix was identified as the preferred model through which the MPS could achieve a balance of scale, impact, and cost.

Implementing a blended-learning solution contributed to the avoidance of some of the considerable costs associated with lengthy, traditional face-to-face tuition whilst maintaining learner presence through a classroom programme for delivery of the specialist elements of the course. Managing delivery costs in this way helped win the relevant approvals for the language training strand of the programme.

Language Training Summary

The MPS Level 1, the first of 3 Language Levels, is designed for beginners and aims to develop proficiency in general language to a conversational level, equipping officers with the necessary linguistic

skills to engage with the multicultural communities of a capital city and to ensure essential communication during first contact when dealing with victims, witnesses, and members of the public. The focus is on speaking and listening skills with some specialist language appropriate to this level which gives officers the language they need to deal with everyday social and simple professional encounters in another language.

The target learners for the programme are front-line officers and staff, e.g. those working in Safer Neighbourhood/Schools/Transport Teams, who are the professional face of the organisation and who play a key role providing crime detection, prevention, and victim care through their engagement with local communities. Languages are carefully selected which are relevant to the specific demographic or visitor profiles of the boroughs of London.

Blended Learning Implementation Model

The MPS implemented a blended-learning approach combining the structure of classroom teaching with the flexibility of online learning into a 12-month programme. Participants first attended two 3-hour tutorials introducing them to language learning, learning styles, and the key steps to success, followed by a general orientation to the structure, grammar, and pronunciation of their selected language. They then began a series of six 6-week learning cycles, each beginning with a 3-hour face-to-face tutorial with the MPS tutors. The tutors

introduced learners to the vocabulary, grammar, and structures of the cycle content and also worked on policing scenarios that may be encountered on the job. After this preparation, learners would study independently with Rosetta Stone® in their own time and at their own pace for six weeks. This learning cycle repeated itself 6 times until all were completed. At the end of the last learning cycle, learners attended a three-day short course where they were tested using Asset Language Teacher Assessments. Success in three listening and two speaking assessments was required to achieve a pass at the MPS Level 1. Assessing the effectiveness and impact of learning is a key priority for the MPS as part of its ongoing programme development.
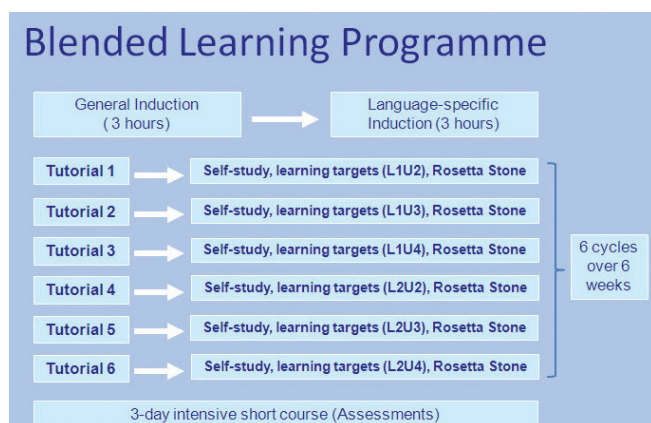
Description of Method Components– Return on Language Learning

Rosetta Stone is currently developing a proprietary model for measurement of Return on Language Learning (ROLL). There are three components
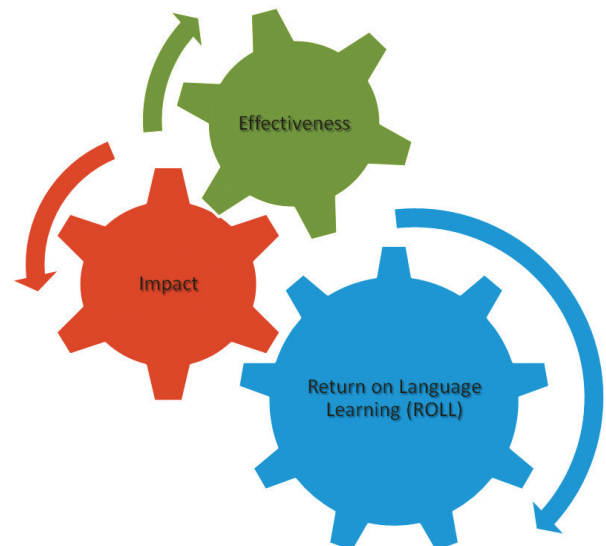
to determining ROLL for an organisation: 1) effectiveness, 2) impact measurement, and 3) Return on Language Learning (ROLL) model development.

First, Rosetta Stone and the MPS have worked closely together to ensure an effective implementation plan since the rollout of the programme in 2010. Utilising a blended-learning model, participants studied a selected language using Rosetta Stone software over

Blended Learning Programme

| General Induction (3 hours) | → | Language-specific Induction (3 hours) |

Tutorial 1	→	Self-study, learning targets (L1U2), Rosetta Stone
Tutorial 2	→	Self-study, learning targets (L1U3), Rosetta Stone
Tutorial 3	→	Self-study, learning targets (L1U4), Rosetta Stone
Tutorial 4	→	Self-study, learning targets (L2U2), Rosetta Stone
Tutorial 5	→	Self-study, learning targets (L2U3), Rosetta Stone
Tutorial 6	→	Self-study, learning targets (L2U4), Rosetta Stone

6 cycles over 6 weeks

3-day intensive short course (Assessments)

a 12-month period. The MPS integrated this into a classroom programme for the purpose of reinforcing language learned in Rosetta Stone® and working with policing scenarios that could be encountered on the job. They implemented a process to monitor and manage learner study to meet the objectives of the programme. As the programme developed, the MPS adjusted policies and procedures to improve programmes for officers and increase retention.

Second, a Conceptual Mapping process was completed. Rosetta Stone and the MPS identified the key impacts on the MPS from implementing this language-learning initiative. Once impact areas had been identified, metrics were developed, where possible, to quantify the value to the organisation. This information was used to develop the assumptions required for the model.

Third, a model was developed for the MPS based on identified impact areas to measure the net intrinsic value generated each year from the programme. An algorithm was then created to quantify impact. The output of each impact area led to the development of annual intrinsic value generated by the language-learning programme. Once generated, the ROLL was calculated utilising capital budgeting techniques with a focus on the long-term value achieved from the implementation of the programme. Annual intrinsic value calculations included the annual investment in the Rosetta Stone licences plus anticipated costs foregone plus any additional costs related to the model implemented.

Conceptual Map Development

Rosetta Stone worked with the MPS to develop a customised Return on Language Learning algorithm. Given experience with this model, it was imperative that the model be customised to the needs of the MPS. A Conceptual Map was created based on the estimated impacts of language learning in their organisation.

The overall goal of the language-learning initiative was to improve communication between officers and the communities of London.

The programme was targeted at three business groups:
1) Territorial Policing
2) Special Operations and
3) Specialist Crime and Operations

There were many benefits identified to the language-learning solution implemented by the MPS. First, having an online solution meant that officers could study the language anytime, anywhere. This created the scalability and flexibility needed for success with a self-study programme. The MPS used the classroom to practise role plays around scenarios that could happen on the job working with the language learned in the Rosetta Stone® solution. By selecting specific business groups, the programme was able to target the languages that would make the most impact on the organisation. In addition, the MPS were focused on finding a solution that would allow officers to acquire the language quickly, thereby reducing the use of phone interpreters and/or colleagues when linguistic support was needed.

Two impact areas were identified that generated positive intrinsic value based on the implementation
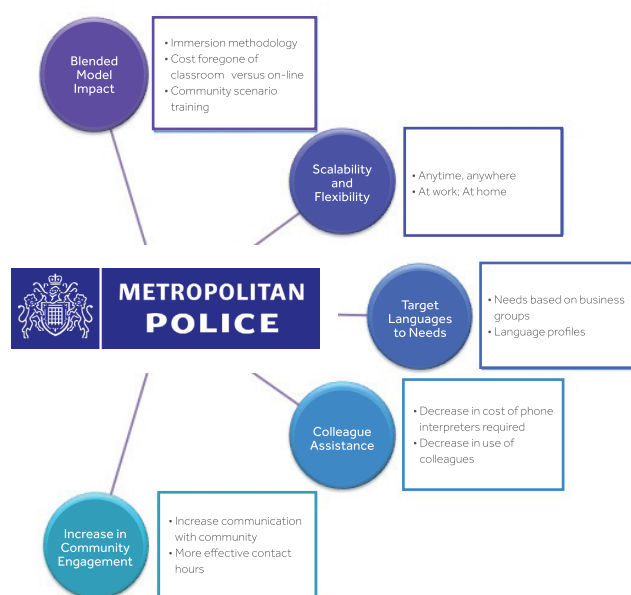
at the MPS. First, the largest impact came implementing a blended-learning model—utilising the Rosetta Stone online solution combined with tutor-led sessions—versus offering face-to-face classroom teaching only. Second, officers relied less on colleagues and phone support for help when

called upon to use their new language. This created additional cost and resourcing avoidance for the MPS.

The language initiative also generated additional costs. First, the MPS paid for the cost of the licences for each officer participating in the programme. In addition, administrative costs, especially associated with the launch of the programme, were also incurred. A small portion of this cost was assumed to be ongoing after the implementation of the programme. Last, in support of the classroom component, teachers had to be hired and trained to conduct the sessions with participants.
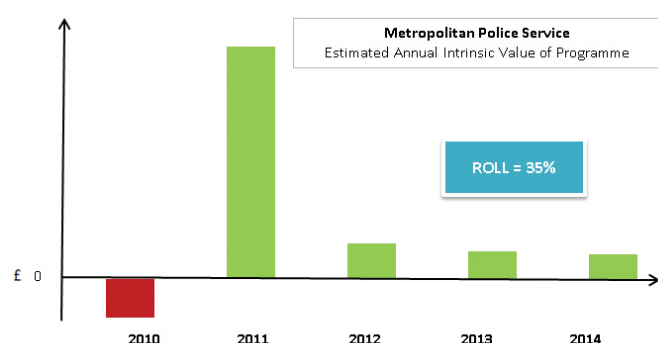
Outcomes and Benefits to the MPS

The language-training programme has made a real change in the way that the MPS can engage with and support the London population and its visitors in reducing and dealing with crime. Being able to communicate with local communities and victims and witnesses of crime in their own languages had led to prompter response times, reduction of risk, better quality of communication, and information and more effective avoidance of conflict through enhanced community engagement.

Value

Using the annual net intrinsic value calculated, the Modified Internal Rate of Return (MIRR) was used to calculate the Return on Language Learning (ROLL).

Results show the Return on Language Learning to

Metropolitan Police Service
Estimated Annual Intrinsic Value of Programme

ROLL = 35%

£ 0

2010   2011   2012   2013   2014

be an average, annualised return of 35%, based on the estimated intrinsic value of the programme.

This intrinsic value to the organisation peaked with initial volumes of training during 2011 but a return is embedded in the annual programme of language courses through subsequent years.

Service and operational benefits

Indicators of the value of language training to the work of the MPS were captured when officers and staff responded to a survey about how their new language skills had helped them in their jobs.

Officers and staff described using their new language as "a normal part of their daily work" with over a quarter of learners putting it to use once or more per week. Learners mostly used their skills to engage with someone else in person (85%), validating the speaking and listening focus of the Level 1 programme. While just over half of learners used their language to engage with a local community or member of the public, another 38% indicated that their language skills had enabled them to progress an investigation. Language skills were mostly used for short interactions of 15 minutes or less but this avoided considerably more time being spent on finding another officer with the relevant language ability or calling in other costly forms of linguistic support.

The following quotes provided from the survey indicate how the course benefitted learners in their work:

"It was enough to be able to conduct a daily task in stopping individuals suspected of being involved in crime. Brilliant!"

"I learnt sufficient German to successfully obtain the required information via a telephone call."

"I was able to assist a French National who was upset after suffering a handbag theft. I provided immediate support to the victim and aided reporting to a uniformed officer." (Police Community Support Officer)

Learners said the following regarding the relevance of the language training to their work:

> *"My limited Turkish made the family of a potential suspect feel more at ease."*
>
> *"In an incident involving a male refusing to pay on a bus, I used Arabic to achieve a rapport and solve a problem as he spoke only limited English."*

Conclusion

Through the effective implementation by the MPS of a blended-learning programme using the Rosetta Stone® online solution, over a 35% Return on Language Learning (ROLL) is estimated based on net annual intrinsic value generated. More critically, the programme generated value and benefits both to the organisation and officers on the front line, allowing them to enhance their communication and engagement with a wider range of London communities as well as offering stronger support to individuals and visitors for whom English is not their first language.