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Milestone in translation of first web application into isiXhosa for students

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has marked a milestone with the translation of the wish, outcome, obstacle, plan (WOOP) web application into isiXhosa. [The app](#) is a self-regulating, goal-setting intervention that is available in 12 main international languages. isiXhosa is the first African vernacular language translation.

A free goal setting and realisation app, WOOP was identified as a system that could help UCT students, especially those in the first-tier residences, achieve their academic targets. First-tier residences accommodate undergraduate students under the age of 21.

The process started in 2018 when UCT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Transformation, Professor Loretta Feris, working in her role as chair of the Residence Academic Development Committee, and members of UCT's Centre for Higher Education Development and the Residence Life Division began working with WOOP originator, Professor Gabriele Oettingen from New York University and the University of Hamburg.

The tool was originally created as a workbook and introduced into the residence system for first years in 2018. It is based on Professor Oettingen's research on how people think about the future and how this affects their cognition, emotion and behaviour. Scientifically, the approach is termed "mental contrasted with implementation intentions". The app has helped people of all ages and nationalities reach their health, career and personal goals.

"Mental contrasting with implementation intentions is a well-researched strategy that has been positively associated with increased academic performance and various increased outcomes," said Residence Life Division senior coordinator for learning and innovation, Sean Abrahams.

isiXhosa was chosen for the WOOP translation as it is one of three languages most spoken at UCT. Professor Oettingen has since agreed to UCT translating the WOOP templates into all other official South African languages.

The development is part of the Residence Life Division's comprehensive student support programme, integral to its Living and Learning co-curriculum for first-tier residences,

said Abrahams. The programme provides innovative and holistic academic and social support to students, within UCT's resource and policy framework.

Acknowledging the extra pressure on students in the residence system during lockdown, the Residence Life Division moved all their support systems online. They have embedded the WOOP app within the online residence tutor and mentor programme and in their pilot online Study Buddy programme. These initiatives have been implemented to help students who were in residence (until COVID-19 struck) cope with the university and nationwide lockdown – and the move to online learning and teaching.

The WOOP app is available on the Apple store and Google Play.

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