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UCT professor challenges universities to rethink student support

12 August 2025 | 17:45 SAST | Hasso Plattner d-school Afrika, The Atrium

In a bold call for transformation in higher education, University of Cape Town's (UCT) Professor Arlene Archer will deliver her inaugural lecture on Tuesday, 12 August 2025, urging universities to move away from decontextualised models of student support that frame students as deficient.

Professor Archer, head of the Writing Centre at UCT, argues that institutions must recognise and harness the rich resources students already possess. Her lecture will address the topic "Critical access to higher education: A multimodal approach to academic literacies".

Archer's lecture will explore how language and writing continue to shape access, inclusion and exclusion in higher education, particularly in the context of South Africa's unequal educational system. She draws on 26 years of experience at UCT's Writing Centre and will examine how students navigate dominant academic genres while incorporating their own ways of knowing.

Her research promotes a multimodal approach to academic literacies that acknowledges diversity and supports meaningful inclusion.

She has published more than 80 works, including four edited books. She has led six internationally funded research projects and is the co-founding editor of *Multimodality and Society* (SAGE). She is a B1-rated researcher and holds an honorary doctorate from Örebro University in Sweden. She is also a fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study.

- Members of the media wishing to attend are requested to [RSVP](#) via email.

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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