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**14 August 2024**

## **UCT lecture looks at how language exclusion at school discriminates and fails learners**

Language, the most valuable resource a child brings to school, is consistently ignored and recast as a problem. This language exclusion inadvertently fails the child.

This disturbing problem has over the last 20 years driven research by Professor Carolyn McKinney, who is professor of language education in the School of Education and a stream leader in applied language and literacy studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT). This matter will be the subject of her inaugural lecture on Wednesday, 14 August 2024.

The lecture is titled: "How are we failing our children? Language and exclusion in schooling". Contributing to international research in critical applied and sociolinguistics, her research shows how colonial and racialised beliefs about language and literacy, or language ideologies, fuel the deficit positioning of multilingual and African language-speaking children.

"Thirty years into democracy so many of our children are still not accessing quality education, and racist incidents are again being reported in historically white schools. In this lecture I share my research on how language is central to these different kinds of exclusion, and what we could do to ensure inclusion for all children," said Professor McKinney.

Drawing on fieldwork conducted in both well and under-resourced schools, she will demonstrate linguistic discrimination and exclusion. Professor McKinney will contrast this with research on 'illegitimate' and informal but productive use of bi/multilingualism by children and teachers, inspiring hope for inclusive learning.

She will end her lecture with an urgent call to the new Minister of Basic Education asking her not to ignore language and literacy, which are essential and basic infrastructure for successful learning, and to implement mother-tongue-based bilingual education.

Professor McKinney's research and teaching focus on language in education policy, language and literacy ideologies, and the use of languaging-for-learning in multilingual education contexts of the Global South. She has led a number of ethnographic-style school-based research projects in these areas. Her publications include the books *Language and Power in Post-Colonial Schooling: Ideologies in Practice* (2017, Routledge) and *Decoloniality, Language and Literacy: Conversations with Teacher Educators* (2022, co-edited with Pam Christie, Multilingual Matters). She is the lead editor of the second edition of *The Routledge*

*Handbook of Multilingualism* (2024) and a founding member of the bua-lit language and literacy collective advocating for the use of African languages and multilingualism in education.

Date: Wednesday, 14 August 2024

Time: 17:30 for 18:00

Venue: Neville Alexander Building, LT1, Lower Campus

- [RSVP to attend the lecture in person.](#)
- [Watch the lecture live.](#)

***Ends***

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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