**Repositioning the Subaltern*:* Crafting pedagogical spaces for EAL/D students to speak, act, and be heard and seen**

Synopsis

Gayatri Chakrabarti Spivak refers to the term *subaltern* to include those who know what to speak but do not have the dominant language, or do not belong to the dominant group in power. They speak, write, create, and produce knowledge. However, this knowledge often remains outside or marginalised from the dominant circuits or networks of knowledge production, distribution, and acquisition. Thus, the subalterns’ voice continues to be silenced and ignored. Spivak argues that this ignorance is sanctioned because of their position of subalternity.

This presentation highlights teachers’ role in shifting EAL/D students’ position from subalterns, who just listen but rarely speak, to co-constructors of knowledge through enactment of the curriculum. It offers new pedagogical insights where recognition of students’ voice and its integration through creative, collaborative approaches contributes towards realising the strength of weaving students’ stories to pedagogical knowledge. This process not only nurtures students’ agency in acquiring content knowledge but also equips them to navigate and contribute effectively to a complex and interconnected world.

Presenter:

Dr Nandini Dutta has worked for more than 25 years as an educator in Australia and overseas and is currently working as a researcher and academic in Griffith University. Through her own experiences as an EAL/D student in Australia and then as a teacher of EAL/D students, she realised how the linguistic, social, or cultural differences can impact negatively on participation in learning, leaving students fearful of being misunderstood and preferring to remain withdrawn or silent. Her edgy, embodied memory of a racialised minority student has led her to reflect deeply on the importance of creating a space for students where they can find their voice, relate their learning to their personal development, and ameliorate feelings of powerlessness. Although power imbalances may never be addressed satisfactorily or permanently, given the complex cultural and gender issues that arise in any classroom, she believes that we can begin by creating a safe space to explore ideas and common ground. This desire to create a safe space where students can find their voices and develop their agency to make more informed choices as tomorrow’s global citizens now informs her teaching and research work.