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# **The use of colloquial expressions with international students, Dr David Rowland and Dr Madan Gupta**

[Start transcript]

**[David]**

I do a lot of work with International students. So if I use an expression like, say for example when I'm working with research students, I talk about the importance of thinking through their research methodology and what they're going to do with their data, rather than just going out and collecting it. And I say, 'Look, one of the things you have to worry about, we have this expression in Australia that 'the devil is in the detail''. But I don't just leave it at that, as they might not know what it means. So I go on and say, 'What that means is that often, when we have plans, we think things are clear, you know, in principle things look good, but then we try to work it out in practice and find that there are little things we didn't consider that cause problems that; there’s detail that are issues'.

**[Madan]**

I come from a different language background so I’m probably one of the persons who realises that language can make things difficult. For example, some of the terms which agricultural scientists use in daily language, many of the international students may not be familiar with that. And one of the things I ensure is that I try to explain the terms before I go for that. And the typical example is that in Australia we often call 'fallow'—it’s not 'f-e-l-l-o-w' as a class fellow, it’s 'f-a-l-l-o-w'—'fallow land' for example. Because of the dry land farming situation in Australia, farmers would often not grow the crop for the six months of the year; it will grow only once in a year. And many of these students coming from Asian countries, where you get farming situations where they take two or three crops a year—'fallow' is like an unknown term to them.

[End transcript]