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ARTS

An unlikely star

Vale Ernest Borgnine { P17 }



COMMENTARY

'WE HAVE BECOME SUPREMACY GOOD AT FAILING TO WIN'

A.A. Gill on the brittle Brits { P10 } + Is Federer the

Experimentation on the science syllabus

EXCLUSIVE

JUSTINE FERRARI
NATIONAL EDUCATION
CORRESPONDENT

SCIENCE as taught in Queensland schools is a "social and cultural activity" that generates explanations of natural phenomena based on "personal experiences", a view rejected by the nat-

ion's deans of science as fundamentally misunderstanding the nature of scientific inquiry.

The description is contained in an overarching statement introducing the syllabus for physics, chemistry and biology for Years 11 and 12 entitled: "A view of science and science education."

"Science is a social and cultural activity through which explanations of natural phenomena are generated," it says.

"Explanations of natural

phenomena may be viewed as mental constructions based on personal experiences and result from a range of activities including observation, experimentation, imagination and discussion.

"Accepted scientific concepts, theories and models may be viewed as shared understandings that the scientific community perceive as viable in light of current available evidence."

The view of science as outlined by the Queensland Studies Auth-

Explanations of natural phenomena are mental constructions based on personal experiences and result from a range of activities including observation, experimentation, imagination and discussion. Science students are encouraged to develop their own cultural perspectives of science.

Extracts from the Queensland Syllabus

ority was utterly rejected by the Australian Council of Deans of Science, representing the heads of science faculties in the nation's universities. The council's executive director, John Rice from Syd-

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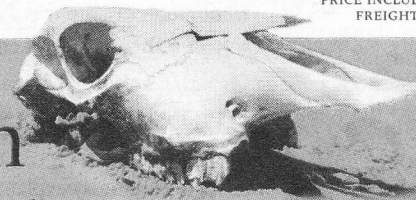
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er the greatest? { SPORT P37 }

A PLUS

Not again

El Nino is back already { SUE NEALES P13 }



syllabus puts feelings before facts

omena may be viewed as mental experiences.

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yllabus Authority

ney University, said it was a misleading view of science and misunderstood "the unique way in which science goes about understanding things".

"That statement makes scien-

tific knowledge sound as though it's no more than the fantasies of a bunch of scientists," he said.

"That's quite wrong. It fails to understand the way in which science grounds itself in observation and testable hypotheses."

The Queensland Studies Authority said the statements concerning a view of science and science education should be read in the context of the entire syllabus and it was not, and was never intended to be, a definition of science.

The authority said the statement was "intended to reflect the complex nature by which scientific understandings have progressed".

"The extract is referring to a way of viewing science education that makes the subject engaging and meaningful in the classroom," the QSA said in a statement.

"The process of deriving scientific facts and empirical knowledge has occurred as scientists have observed, experimented, imagined

and discussed their understandings. QSA's science syllabuses make clear that there is a body of conceptual knowledge and facts that underpin the study of subjects such as physics, chemistry and biology." The authority said all teams writing science syllabuses for Queensland included a practising scientist and science education

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