



Faculty of Education  
University of British Columbia  
2125 Main Mall, Vancouver  
British Columbia  
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January 23, 2009

Dear Ms. Clara Rech:

It has come to my attention that the Italian Ministry of Education is proposing to reduce the amount of art history taught in Italian secondary schools. I also recognize that the *Associazione Nazionale Insegnanti di Storia dell'Arte* (ANISA), for which you are President, has communicated their concern over this proposal. I am writing in support of the ANISA position. As the President of the *International Society for Education through Art*, I have the privilege of meeting art educators from around the world. On these occasions I am able to learn about the strengths of various programs while coming to appreciate the challenges art educators face amidst educational reform. It is on this basis that I am writing in support of the ANISA position.

Many worldwide arts education curricula specialists are facing potential reductions of class time, teacher specialization, and student access to specialized curriculum content. Ironically there are many governments who have recognized their near-sightedness in reducing arts education in the past and are currently reintroducing these subject areas with great enthusiasm. Moreover, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like UNESCO have provided significant resources and attention toward promoting the necessity of robust arts education in the K-12 school system. The primary reasons for the latter rests with promoting creativity, embracing a deep appreciation of history, and encouraging socio-cultural understanding in an increasingly globalized world. The arts are unique in their ability to provide for these pursuits in an integrated, interdisciplinary fashion. This is especially apparent with art history. Students of art history are the guardians of rich cultural heritage. They are also the critical thinkers who are reimagining how art history may influence, impact, and enhance perceived national and international identities, globalized notions of visual culture, and economic viability within vulnerable consumer markets. In other words, art history isn't a thing of the past. It is current, forward thinking and essential to the education of young people. I trust my argument is persuasive and I look forward to learning that art history class time will be maintained in Italian schools and not reduced as proposed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Rita Irwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R'.

Dr. Rita L. Irwin  
President, InSEA  
Professor, Art Education  
Associate Dean, Teacher Education, UBC

