**Guidelines** for preparing a special thematic volume in the Sense paperback series and on-line issue of the *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*.

**A. Proposal stage:**

1. Set up an editorial team with proven expertise in the area to be covered by the special thematic issue, ideally made up of three scholars, with a balance between genders and also location. It would be good if one of the co-editors came from the non-European Mediterranean (e.g. from an Arab state, or from Turkey, for instance).
2. Together with the co-editors, prepare a Call for ABSTRACTS (NOT a Call for Papers), on the basis of a proposal for a special thematic volume. Having abstracts rather than article drafts at this initial stage is an opportunity for you as editors to shape the thematic issue in particular ways, while of course not putting the authors in a straitjacket.
3. Submit the Call/Proposal to the general editor of the MJES/Sense Series. Once approved, the Proposal and Call are disseminated widely through the MJES/EMCER network. The MJES General Editor will also arrange for a contract to be issued. Any royalties arising out of the sale of the volume will go to the co-editors.
4. The Call for Abstracts makes it clear that all editing, including language and copy-editing, is the responsibility of the authors, under the direction of the editors. The MJES does not have the resources to do it for authors (or for the guest editors).
5. Notes for Contributors (the details regarding style, referencing), are at [http://www.um.edu.mt/emcer/mjes/contributors](http://www.um.edu.mt/emcer/mjes/contributors). The more exigent you are about these requirements, the less work the editorial team will have to do when the manuscripts reach them. It is absolutely crucial to hand over clean copies to the General Editor.
6. On the basis of abstracts received, editors choose the most promising abstracts. Ideally, a special thematic issue will have: [a] a total of between 8-10 papers, each around 6000 words in length; [b] not more than one paper from the same country; [c] a broad coverage of the different sub-regions of the Mediterranean (i.e. south Europe, north Africa, Middle East); and [d] at least one comparative paper. Comparative pieces are to be encouraged and even preferred over single country case studies.

7. Special issue editors are expected to write an editorial introduction, which in many cases is a substantial piece that not only engages the papers that are ultimately accepted, but also orient the reader to the field and its main landmarks. In most cases, special issue editors also contribute a paper each, taking into account, both in terms of volume length, and spread of themes, approaches, and so on.

8. The choice from the abstracts sent by prospective contributors does not mean that the paper that is eventually submitted will be published, since papers have to be refereed by a minimum of 2 referees per paper, and by the General Editor or select members of the MJES editorial board acting on his behalf.

9. Keep in mind the special character of the MJES book series: we are not after ‘technicist’, ‘how to’ papers, but rather strong analytic pieces that do justice to the intersections between education, culture, and geo-politics, and which use the Mediterranean as a 'lens' that potentially generates new insights into aspects of education systems and practices.

10. An example of a Call for Abstracts is attached as Appendix 1 and can be used/adapted as a ‘template’ for your own Call.

B. Feedback stage:

1. Once draft papers start reaching the editorial team, you can send these out to referees. First, however, it is important for the editor/s to make a preliminary reading of submissions to ensure that the contribution is a sound one, has the potential of reaching the standard expected, and unambiguously related to the special theme.

2. Referees are to provide detailed and specific feedback to authors, also as comments using the ‘review’ function in Word.

3. Once you have all the reports for a particular article, the next task is for the co-editors to decide how to 'package' that feedback so that it makes sense to the author/s. You have a couple of options here: [a] you either send the reviewers’ comments ‘tale quale’, but add a note where, as editors, you highlight the key points and steer the authors in a particular direction, or [b] you provide a consolidated report, drawing on the different reviewers’ comments, and adding your own, so that it gives a clear sense of direction to the author/s in question (an example is provided in Appendix 2 below). It is important that the review process is taken seriously: in a number of special issues, some papers went through up to four iterations: the point is to keep the authors engaged, while pushing them as far as possible to obtain a publishable piece.

4. It may be advisable for each co-editor to take responsibility for 2 to 3 authors, though the lead editor should coordinate the process to expedite
matters and ensure quality. Having the responsibilities distributed among the co-editors leads to each knowing 2 to 3 papers very well, and this could be useful when it comes to making a decision as to whether the revisions did take the critiques seriously into account.

5. The referees’ track change editing may have to include some language editing, even if the responsibility for language and copy-editing lies mainly with the authors. Other editorial tasks may include making specific suggestions, raising queries, and so on. This is very time-consuming, but when done well, avoids hassles downstream.

6. Experience has taught us that it is VITAL to ask authors, when they send in their revised versions, to attach a detailed cover letter outlining how they took the referees’ comments into account. It is advisable not to commit yourselves to publishing anything before you are thoroughly satisfied with the work, and after hearing from the MJES editorial board. Always add that there might be other minor issues might arise when the manuscript is being prepared for publication, and that you would get in touch with them at that stage if and when the need arises.

C. The Publications stage
1. Once the final drafts of the papers are in and approved, the editorial team will need to prepare the volume in line with Sense Publisher requirements.
2. Sense provides a template to which you upload the word files with the articles. Editors, or persons acting on their behalf, would then need to ensure that the indenting, line spacing, referencing etc are according to Sense Publisher instructions and are consistent throughout. It helps greatly to have a copy of a Sense volume at hand.
3. While most guest editors have opted to prepare the camera-ready copies themselves, others have obtained some funding from their institutions to employ somebody to do it for them. Keep in mind that Sense goes to press with the document we send them: it will be checked by their team, but basically what we send them is what they print.
4. Towards the end of the process, Sense usually also asks for the following information:
   - a short blurb for the back (summary, plus endorsements by scholars)
   - 3 key words
   - 1 unique point that sets your book apart from others
   - A list of journals willing to review of your book
5. All authors will also be required to sign the usual copyright form, indicating that the chapter has not been published elsewhere and that there are no copyright infringements.
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS:
Special Issue of Comparative and International Education Series,
in collaboration with the Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies
Sense Publishers—Rotterdam

“Private Tutoring across the Mediterranean:
Constructions, Deconstructions, and Implications for
Learning and Equity”

co-edited by
Professor Mark Bray, University of Hong Kong
Professor André E. Mazawi, University of British Columbia
Professor Ronald G. Sultana, University of Malta

This special issue will document and deconstruct the phenomenon of private tutoring within various social, national and geographic contexts across the Mediterranean region. Many of the education systems in the region focus on transmissive pedagogies that privilege coverage of an extensive curriculum, with learning often being assessed by means of high-stakes examinations at the end of the primary, and especially the secondary cycle prior to entry into the further and higher education sector. A range of reasons can be given for the resort to what Bray (1999, 2009) and others have referred to as the ‘shadow’ or ‘parallel’ education system, including:

• high student-to-teacher class ratios leading parents to want supplementary tutoring for their children after regular school hours;
• parents who, for one reason or another—such as being insufficiently educated or too busy with their career commitments—cannot supervise their children while doing their homework, and rely on paid tutors to do so;
• a culture of competitive achievement that drives parents to see private tutoring as a means to increase the chances of their children not only passing, but getting better grades than their classmates;
• a sense of anxiety that, given that so many other parents are paying for private lessons for their children, they should do the same, at the expense of feeling guilty and insecure if they do not;
• in order to help students catch up with their peers, particularly if they have missed out on lessons due to prolonged absence due to illness;
• pressures generated by admissions policies into higher education for those just graduating from high school, where admission criteria allocate students to various specialisations according to the grade average obtained in their high school matriculation diploma.
This represents the demand side for private tuition, a demand that can be stimulated by a range of factors that could be related to learning and achievement aspirations, but also to social status or class dynamics. On the supply side, the extent to which private tuition is widespread can relate to a different logic, one that has more to do with the need of low-paid teachers wanting to supplement their salaries by offering their pedagogical services for a fee after regular school time, or that is associated with social class considerations. The marketization of education also brings in corporate entities, some of which operate across national borders.

Private tutoring is a highly contested terrain and a sensitive political question from the point of view of policy makers, educators, and parents. Some consider its positive features, including support for students who need help in mastering the curriculum, the provision of structured ways of spending free time, and supplementary income for teachers. Others point to its potentially devastating effects on schooling and the learning process. They argue that teachers might feel tempted to reserve their spare capacity for their after-school commitments rather than giving their all to their students during their regular duties. Similarly, students might invest more effort in fulfilling tasks set during private tutoring, and start finding the school day boring or irrelevant. Private tuition might rob students of opportunities for leisure and carefree socialising with peers and within families. Education might be reduced even further to coaching for exams, or to a positional good that is to be consumed for the purpose of status and prestige. Given that private tuition is offered against a fee, learning outcomes will be even more strongly related to one’s socio-economic background, with social inequalities being maintained and increased. Families with traditional views and with limited incomes might prefer to send their sons rather than their daughters to private tuition, thus reinforcing gender inequalities.

The special issue that is being planned will feature papers that:

- Explore the prevalence of the phenomenon of private tuition, and the various forms it takes within in one or more countries of the Mediterranean;
- Consider the nature and implications of the phenomenon in a range of settings, and in relation to different levels of the education system;
- Give special attention to the consequence of private tuition for learning as well as social equity;
- Unpack the gender, class, ethnicity and other lines of demarcation along which private tutoring unfolds.

Authors who are interested in contributing a paper should submit a 500-word abstract to ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt, copied to mbray@hku.hk and andre.mazawi@ubc.ca by 15 November 2010. Authors will be informed whether their abstract has been selected by mid-December, and will be expected to submit a first full draft of their paper by July 2011. All papers submitted will be evaluated using the MJES peer review process. Please consult the Journal’s information for authors: http://www.um.edu.mt/emcer/mjes
The criteria for the selection of abstracts and for the evaluation of papers include:

- Empirical grounding of the phenomenon of private tuition within at least one country in the Mediterranean region.
- A comparative perspective that takes a cluster of Mediterranean countries into account in order to identify and provide for a set of analytical insights into a particular pattern that has been identified.
- Competent use of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. Papers that represent the voices of teachers, parents, and/or students are particularly welcome.
- Strong engagement with theoretical frameworks linked to learning and equity. The analytic dimension needs to be emphasised, and papers that remain at a purely descriptive level will not be accepted. It is also possible to propose a paper analysing policy responses to the private tuition phenomenon, preferably from a comparative perspective.

Further instructions will be provided to authors after the selection process from the abstracts submitted has been completed.

References
Appendix 2: Example of consolidated feedback given to a prospective author by a co-editor on behalf of the editorial team.

Dear ____________,

In the team for the special issue of the Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies on “Private Tutoring in the Mediterranean: Constructions, Deconstructions, and Implications for Learning and Equity”, I have the pleasure of being the focal point for your manuscript. I am glad to be able to give you feedback on it.

All three co-editors have read the manuscript with care.

We feel that there is a lot of valuable material in the paper, and that with more work, that material could be structured and presented in ways that would make the article suitable for publication. Because we think that there is promise in the paper, we have gone to some lengths in order to highlight the changes that would need to be carried out. We do this in two ways: first, we present a set of general comments below; second, we make some more detailed comments, as well as suggested changes, to the document you sent us. We therefore also attach two files with our feedback and editorial suggestions appearing in track change mode. In reading the attached files, please differentiate between ‘comments’ and deletions. Comments are local and often raise specific issues regarding the clarity of statements.

Here is the more general feedback regarding the first version of your article:

1. The paper offers an introductory overview of the main aspects and features of shadow education in ______. As such, the paper introduces the reader to the literature and main policy initiatives relevant to understand this aspect of _____ education. The authors have done a good job in terms of drawing on a wide range of materials, which it appears they have done their best to engage. Members of the international community who do not read ____ will appreciate the ‘window’ that you provide into the ______ language literature which would otherwise be inaccessible.

2. This said, the paper is predominantly summative and descriptive, with little space devoted to analyses of the underlying factors involved. While the paper provides a solid framework that emphasizes the “deeply ingrained” aspect of shadow education in ______, the paper, as it stands, is marked by lots of repetitions, convoluted sentences and opaque remarks which do not help the reader to get a clear sense of what is being said. During revision, the authors should strive to attend this foundational aspect of their paper. Attending to issues of language, paper organization, and the need for analytic observations - not just descriptive summations - are central to the success of the revision.

3. When revising the paper, greater attention should be paid to making a judicious selection from the available material, how to present it, and for what purpose. The purpose of the paper should be clearly announced from the start, indeed, from the
very title of the article. The paper needs an angle of approach, not just a topic and a country, and this should be signaled in the title. That might then assist the authors in their streamlining and strengthening of conclusions.

4. The authors have clearly thought long and hard about the phenomenon of private tutoring, and have a number of important things to say. However, they need to make up their mind as to what it is that they want to focus on. As it currently stands, the paper gives a lot of attention to historical and contextual background, and while some of it is needed, much of it is not. The manuscript is far too detailed given the scope of a journal article that should be around 6,000 words in length (not 10,000 words, as in the current version). There is an assemblage of ‘facts’ that tends to confuse the reader in terms of direction and purpose, when much of this could have been summarised, presented with much more clarity in tabular format, allowing the authors to focus on analysis.

5. The lengthy review of the structure of the educational system is not really warranted. Yes, introducing the main labels/sectors - e.g. lyceum - is important, but as it stands, this part lengthens the paper without adding much to the reader's engagement with the topic. This section should be re-written in a much shorter way and integrated in the preceding or subsequent section. Pages 1 to 11 should be summarised, briefly outlining the main factors that have contributed to the rise of private tutoring. These different factors could be organised around a number of categories (e.g. systemic, cultural, political, etc), to enable the reader to get a sense of the different forces that come together to promote a particular social practice.

6. At different locations throughout the paper, the authors review in detail a set of studies on a particular aspect of shadow education. While this is commendable, the result is a set of summing-up paragraphs which succeed each other in a technical form, with a cascade of numbers and percentages which end up hiding or blurring the overall analytic understanding/insights that a reader might get out of this review. Moreover, the reporting of various studies often repeats the same points in different ways, without really touching on the basic conclusion.

7. While the authors discuss questions regarding inequities between urban-rural regions, and to a lesser extent among social classes, they do not provide insights into other axes of demarcation, such as gender. Perhaps guess the authors have not found any studies tackling this dimension of shadow education? In any case, it seems important that the authors seize the opportunity to say something about the lack of such a reference and provide readers with an opportunity to engage the question of gender, not just as a variable in itself, but also in terms of its regional and social class interactions.

8. Several claims are made (e.g. about the state of public education) without reference to research that would back up these statements.

9. The paper has too many footnotes. If the information is important, this should be integrated in the main text. Otherwise it should be removed.

10. English needs attention throughout, and suggestions on the way language can be improved been made in several places in the text.
We are aware that attending to these comments, and the ones in the attached documents, will take time, but we do feel that it is worth investing this effort in revising your article, which would make an important and timely contribution to the special issue on a theme which is attracting increasing policy attention across Europe and our region. We therefore invite you to:

[1] carefully consider all the feedback that is provided above, plus the two files with remarks in “track changes”;

[2] submit a revised version by ……………………., and earlier if possible;

[3] attach a cover letter to the revised version, explaining in detail how you have taken the reviewers’ comments into account;

[4] ensure that the paper has been language edited – if necessary by a native speaker of English [unfortunately, we do not have the resources to do the language editing for you];


It is very important that you follow these instructions, so that we expedite the process and make it as smooth as possible. It may be that further iterations will be necessary, but we hope to have the special issue wrapped up by end November 2011. Our plan is to also publish the special issue as a paperback with Sense Publishers (Rotterdam) in 2012. In respect of that, and once we have concluded all iterations and have queued your paper for publication, we will be asking you to sign a copyright release form. It is naturally your responsibility to get copyright release for any part of the paper that has already appeared elsewhere.

Can we ask you to confirm safe receipt of this email and attachments, and to give us an indication of when to expect your revised paper? Thank you.

Once again, congratulations, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Xxxxx, also on behalf of xxxxx, and xxxxx.