

# EduTimes

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# Contents

Inches Make Champions	01
Private Educational Counseling Profession Grows Despite Economy	02
Going Abroad	03
Case Study	05
MIT InvenTeam in Shenzhen, China	06
New Findings	07
Top Ten Strengths and Experiences Colleges Look for in High School Students	08
Advisors' Contribution	09

# Inches Make Champions

BY YITING SHEN

Champions pay attention to small details and know they count, like inches adding up to make a mile. The extra 5 minutes you practice, the extra 15 minutes you spend in the film room, or the single question or answer to the coaches on any one thing that can make you better...everything counts. They all add up.

Before one spends the extra efforts, the question is in which direction and how to make each inch happen.

Should one spend more time in ballet practicing or drawing class? Should one not go out with friends but stay home to solve math problem sets? Should one balance with one hour each or simply focus on one activity? Will the inches add up to a straight mile or is it like a star beaming all directions? A professional education and career planning may help answer the questions.

In the Western world, following one's passion is the rule of thumb. Parents are often strong advocates and great facilitators. However, in China, many are still buried under high peer pressure and strong family dictatorship. We're trained in many different things, and seem well rounded... Yet, few of us are considered a champion.

To succeed, 3 things are required as Jim Collins said in his book, Good to Great, 'what lights your fire? What could you be best in the world at? What makes you money?' The passion, unique skill set, and the economics are the drivers for career planning. KCG has designed four modules and 22 service offerings to meet the needs in an integrated approach.

On the other hand, life is what happens when we are

making other plans\*\*. A doer mentality is how we make each inch worthwhile. Planning is important yet execution is what counts. Especially for education and career, to make progress takes a long time, inch by inch. KCG's journey is a good example:

Inch 0: doodling the idea of making a McKinsey for Chinese youth education

Inch 1: educating ourselves and crafting the service model

Inch 2: setting up the office, resourcing talents

Inch 3: constructing database, website, blog, newsletters

Inch 4: building strategic partnerships cross continents

Inch 5: designing detailed product and service modules

Inch 6: piloting the service and adapting user feedback

Inch 7: running road shows and commercial trials

Inch x: .....

Sometimes the inches do not add up, becoming curves and circles. We have made the

best out of it. With the right group of people and strong belief in the big mission, we

make each inch solid. Our road show is also in full swing, so expect to hear from us

very soon. You are cordially invited.

Every inch counts – to the journey of a champion, you and me together!

# Private Educational Counseling Profession Grows Despite Economy

BY JOYCE FU

With the country in a recession, pervasive economic uncertainty, and unemployment on the rise, it might be surprising to hear that families are turning to educational consultants more than ever to help with school and college placements. As the economy weakens, hiring a qualified educational advisor for your school or college search makes more sense than ever, for both academic and financial reasons.

“With schools and colleges becoming more expensive and competitive, and student anxiety levels off the charts, families feel increased pressure to make a lasting, successful choice for their student,” says a famous educatee in US, “An independent educational consultant serves as a student’s personal resource during this important decision-making process, which explains the growth in consulting during these tough economic times.”

Families want to find a good match for their child, where he or she succeeds, thrives, and graduates. Educational consultants can improve the odds of success, and ultimately save the family money. Because consultants are familiar with a multitude of schools, they can present students with a much wider selection of possibilities, and provide vital help in weighing factors such as cost, location, social environment, academics, and financial aid. It benefits the family to find the right fit for their child, avoiding having to transfer schools, which is an expensive process, particularly since credits often don’t transfer, incurring additional fees and losing time.

A consultant also helps families refine and pare down a list so families do not travel to look at inappropriate schools or colleges, and filing more applications than necessary. Independent educational consultants spend 20 percent of their time on the road, meeting with admission officers, touring campuses, and interviewing students and professors. Consultants learn extensive, first-hand knowledge of colleges around the country, and continually keep up-to-date on changes and admission trends. This



personal insight provides families with a much fuller understanding of a school or college than is conveyed in a brochure or website, which is often created by a marketing firm, and can save parents a great deal of time and effort.

When a family decides to hire an educational consultant, they will want to be sure to get one that is highly qualified. The consultant service of KCG is that guarantee. They have met the highest standards in the profession. Their consultants required qualifications include a master’s degree, at least three years of admissions counseling experience, extensive campus visits, and experience working with scores of students before their application with KCG will be considered. KCG’s educational consultants are professionals who assist students and families with educational decision-making. Their educational backgrounds, specialized training, campus visits, and professional experience equip them to help students choose schools, colleges, or programs that meet their individual needs and goals. KCG requires their consultants to meet professional standards and subscribe to its Principles of Good Practice. Their consultants continually update their knowledge and maintain skills through academic meetings, workshops, training programs, and information exchanges with colleges, schools, programs and other educational consultants.

# Going Abroad

– A trend, A dream, or An uncertain Journey for Students?

BY KENT XU

Going abroad for education is increasingly becoming a trend for many Chinese students. When this movement interacts with China's famous National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), it played out some interesting and realistic phenomenon which might contradict with the fabulous umbrella of "Going Abroad".

For many gifted students from traditional Chinese families, it is harsh to make up their mind of giving up NCEE and risking their future by going abroad for higher education when they are entering high school at grade 10. This is especially difficult when the child is studying in top tier high school and his/her prospective of being admitted by a prestigious domestic college is pretty bright. Majority of them will be hanging around for quite a while between Going abroad and Attending NCEE, or more realistically or automatically driven by the strong atmosphere in school, continuing on normal route of aiming at NCEE first.

This could be changed when kids are at their grade 11, or entering grade 12 when application to college approaches and many successful stories of going abroad from close friends inspires children's ambition and setting up their mind. Unfortunately, at this time, the preparation timetable is very tight. If



they are still hesitating on giving up NCEE, it is very difficult to go through all the tedious work of passing TOEFL, SAT, SAT II with decent score in less than one year. Many or some talented students fight their way out, being fully on swing of application to colleges of US or UK or else. Majority of students are afraid of losing both frontiers and continue on NCEE route as first priority. This is a conservative and reasonable option.

Each spring when admission season comes, the reality played out:

Episode 1: Top tier students are accepting admission offers from top tier, or second, third tier colleges from US, UK or Canada from April. They could have problems of selecting from a few offers. This group is the real

Studying Abroad as first year college students. May is the month to make decision which school he / she goes. For some students on the waiting list, the time is lengthy.

Episode 2: Between April and June, Many UK colleges, even some packed programs from US, are issuing admission letters to Chinese students for prerequisite programs under some conditions which are relatively easy to reach. These students are enrolled not as college students but as prerequisites in UK even the title is the same "Studying Abroad". Typically, colleges in US do not have this offer.

Episode 3: After NCEE, top tier one or two students earn their high scores and are looking forward to

be admitted by prestigious domestic schools. Few top students from this group fight in two lines. They tried application to US or UK at the same time. Normally, the outcome is not as good as their performances in NCEE.

Episode 4: After NCEE, or after the score published, many students who have unsatisfied performance in NCEE, rush to the agents for going abroad study programs. Many of these students are emotionally hurt and socially humiliated, especially many second tier talented students from local prestigious high schools. They are desperate on going abroad. But the reality ahead of them is pretty much on stake. Typically, they have no preparation on standard tests like TOEFL, IELTS or SAT or have poor scores. Many agents and colleges from UK, Australia, even some from US are awaiting for them. If they are lucky, finishing test in very short time and get reasonable good scores. They have chance of catching up last train to UK for prerequisite program or college in Australia. But the quality and ranking of these schools are something beyond your expectation in many cases. It is fair. They are aiming at your mind "Going Abroad" and your money. You get your dream of "going abroad" in whatever sense.

The above is good part of the story. The most astonishing piece of the whole Going Abroad picture is about a group of students who end up with an

admission letter of language schools from US, UK, Canada or elsewhere. Those students are the clients agents like most, easy and big money! There are many tricky skills surrounding these programs. They could be entitled with Prerequisite Program from a decent university of US, or Europe. The reality is the parents have to pay as much the tuition fee as a very good private college in US, like \$35,000 a year, for a one year language program! It is only a certificate for language training, nothing to do with the admission to the colleges to which these programs are attached. As a matter of fact, language test training in China like in New Oriental, could bring a better score than in US or elsewhere. After their parents paying high price, these kids get satisfaction of "going abroad" Face and a long and uncertain journey ahead of them. They have to fight their own way to pass all the tests like TOEFL, SAT, SAT II, to be enrolled into a good college in a new and strange country. Normally, this group of students is not mentally prepared for the challenges in front of them. Many sad stories around "going abroad" come from this type of students. They could end up of spending up to RMB 1 million and get no diploma back or a diploma from an unknown or unrecognized college. For them, Going Abroad is a painful and rocky experience.



# Case Study

——“Global Dedicated Educational Counseling Service”

BY JOYCE FU



## MR XINYU LIU: BACKGROUND

Mr Xinyu Liu, 15 years old boy from Tianjing City, who wants to receive his higher education in overseas. His father is a senior government officials and his mother is a business executive in a Telecommunication company. He had the top level certificate of piano in 2001. His academic context always remains at the lower-middle and that a length in his middle school of China.

## DESIGNED A PERSONALIZED “OVERSEAS INDEPENDENT STUDY ROUTE” FOR HIM

From the data of Mr Liu’s self-evaluation paper, the results of Career Character Psychology Test (Cambridge University) and the Family Survey (FSS), we thought he had enough actual strength to try world-class schools and universities. We also found his science subjects is obviously better than liberal arts after

discussed with his school teachers and analyzed all the test results and comments.

## IMPROVED HIS ENGLISH ABILITY AND PREPARED THE ENTRANCE EXAM

With his IELTS 5.5, he couldn’t pass the entrance exam of top 10 private high schools in UK. And for the top one university of UK that his parents targeted, he must get at least 7.0 in IELTS. We recommended an intensive English course (one year) for him and arranged a private oral English teacher for training his interview skills.

## SELECTED MAJORS AND UNIVERSITY APPLICATION

Focused on his personal interests and family’s economic status, we recommended several top UK schools in his three study stages. We revised and checked all his application documents, including personal

statements, reference letters, application forms, interview questions & answers prepared etc.

## APPLICATION OF HIGH SCHOOL

As his parents wanted him to study in Cambridge University, we recommended Leys School as his target high school. It is the No.1 A level school in England. Our consultant knew most of the teachers in Leys are graduated from Cambridge University, and the School offers unique interview guidance course for Oxbridge Applications. Compared with other A level schools, Leys has remarkable advantages for him.

## MR. TAO CHEN: APPLICATION OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDY

After a careful assessment in all the data of tests and survey, we found

Mr. Tao Chen was greatly interested in “Engineering work”, and he has the certain talent and display special potential in the relevant areas. We helped him to select four A level subjects: Maths, Further Maths, Physics, Chemistry.

At the end of his first year in A level, we contacted two professors of Department of Engineering in Cambridge University, and arranged personal interviews and entrance exam for him. As everything were fully prepared, he smoothly attained the pre-enrollment notice which is been listed 1st.

#### APPLICATION OF GRADUATE STUDY

According to Mr. Tao Chen’s possible practical research orientation, we

suggested him to do PhD in US. We designed the whole application plan for him in his second year of university. We recommended Princeton and MIT University for him and helped to prepare the research proposal and other application documents.

#### SCHOOL LIFE & CAREER PLANNING

We helped him to appoint to enter “Talent Maths Competition in UK” and “International Physical Olympiad” etc. He got very good results in these competitions.

We provided interns with pre-internship training and consoling, with a goal to maximize intern’s performance at the company. He had successfully completed his internships

in an investment bank of China and a global IT company of UK.

#### RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENT

In 2005 He passed the private entrance exam of Leys school

In 2006 He passed the interview & paper test and accepted conditional offer (AAA) from

Cambridge University, in his first year of High school.

In June 2010 He got First-class BA degree in Cambridge University

In July 2010 He successfully got the unconditional offer and granted the full scholarships from the Department of Computer Science, Princeton and MIT university.

## MIT InvenTeam in Shenzhen, China

BY KENT XU

For almost two decades, MIT has been advocating creativity and inventing spirit in high school education across the world through Lemelson-MIT Program named InvenTeam. This year two high schools from China have been nominated to attend the project. Shenzhen Middle School is one of them.

According to schedule, one teacher from Shenzhen Middle School has been sent to MIT on June for training. Team building and concept design phase was commenced upon the teacher’s return to the school. On September, the school should select 7-8 students from the current around 24 students to form an official team and submit their proposal for the project after brainstorming period from July to August in summer.

With approval from MIT, the team will attend the design phase and build phase from October until May 2011. Finally in June, all the teams will go to MIT to present and demonstrate their invention prototype and share their experiences and stories. Some exemplary teams will attract attentions from VC or related industries.

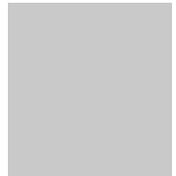
During the process, there are a few interesting elements like cooperate sponsorship, alumni’s mentorship and media’s coverage. For Shenzhen Middle School, they have Tencent’s sponsor. Two MIT alumni have joined as mentors, including KCG’s founder Kent Zhan Xu.

# New Findings

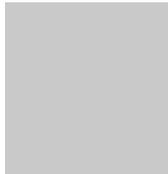
BY JOYCE FU

## YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE

Scientists have found that most people think their hands are shorter and fatter than they really are. The research at University College London hid people's hands and asked them to show where they thought their fingers were. This information was used to find out how the brain saw the hand. The scientists think this research could explain why some people think they are fat when they are too thin, and risk their health by eating too little.



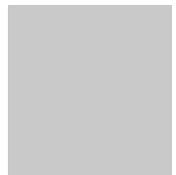
## HAPPY FAMILIES



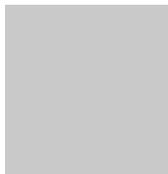
Couples with children are less likely to divorce if the man helps at home. New research done at the London School of Economics shows that the more the man helps at home, the less chance there is of the marriage ending. The risk of divorce is highest if the woman works and the man does not help in the house.

## WHY SCHOOL FRIENDS ARE GOOD FOR YOU

Popular children earn higher salaries as adults, according to new British research. Scientists at Essex University found that each extra friend someone has at school raises their salary by 2 per cent forty years later. They said this was because the most popular children had better social skills. These were helpful when they started work. They also found more intelligent children were likely to be more popular, and so more successful. However, the scientists said the length of education and overall intelligence had more impact on later earnings than being able to make friends.



## WHAT EXACTLY DOES "SUCCESSFUL AGING" MEAN?



For more than a half century, researchers and gerontologists have argued whether successful aging is better defined subjectively (how older adults view their own state of aging) or objectively (physical disease-related disability or mental decline). Answering this question is more than an academic exercise. As the first members of the famed "baby boom generation" reach age 65, understanding what it means to remain healthy and independent in later life could have an enormous impact on health care delivery and medical policy.

Researchers from the New Jersey Institute for Successful Aging (NJISA) at the UMDNJ-School of Osteopathic Medicine have recently unveiled new findings that clarify what it means to age successfully, and point to modifiable factors that could help more people remain healthy as they age. The researchers found that people are more likely to age successfully if they are educated, have never been incarcerated, are married, consume only moderate amounts of

alcohol and either work for pay or do volunteer work. The findings, based on telephone surveys of more than 5,600 New Jersey residents between the ages of 50 and 74, appear in an advance article in *The Gerontologist*.

The researchers examined how factors early in life, as well as current behaviors, distinguished four groups of older individuals: those who age successfully according to objective criteria; those who age successfully according to subjective criteria; those who are successful according to both measures; and those who age successfully according to neither set of criteria.

"Education and incarceration were particularly strong factors," Pruchno said. "The fact that we currently have a large number of people in prison serving relatively short sentences could herald a significant public health problem in the future. Interestingly, although marriage also coincided with successful aging, being childless did not appear to have a negative impact."



## Top Ten Strengths and Experiences Colleges Look for in High School Students

—Based on a Newest Survey of US Educational Consultants

BY JOYCE FU

1. A rigorous high school curriculum that challenges the student and may include AP or IB classes.
2. Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are referred to all As in less challenging coursework.
3. Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT, ACT). These should be consistent with high school performance.
4. Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative. Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important.
5. Letters of recommendation from teachers and guidance counselor that give evidence of integrity, special skills, positive character traits, and an interest in learning.
6. A well-written essay that provides insight into the student's unique personality, values, and goals. The application essay should be thoughtful and highly personal. It should demonstrate careful and well-constructed writing.
7. Special talents or experiences that will contribute to an interesting and well-rounded student body.
8. Demonstrated leadership in activities. Colleges want people who will arrive prepared and willing to take leadership of student activities and events.
9. Demonstrated intellectual curiosity through reading, school, leisure pursuits, and more.
10. Demonstrated enthusiasm to attend, often exhibited by campus visits and an interview, showing an interest toward attending the college.

# Advisors' Contribution

## Caihong (Margaret) Wei

Ms. Caihong (Margaret) Wei is an expert in the organization and leadership development areas. She has led Lenovo's TM University, and senior executive and high-potential talent development programs, and was the HR leader for COE in Lenovo's Emerging Markets Group. She also worked for the Monitor Group in the US and offered consultancy related to the BRIC nations, and worked for Towers Perrin in Hong Kong and offered consultancy in Change Management (incl. M&A) and Communication, Leadership Transformation, and Executive Compensation and Rewards. Her clients included leading companies from around the globe such as HSBC, Coca-Cola, Bayer, Lenovo, 3Com, Fugro N.V., Citrix, SinoFert, WorldUnion, etc. She is certified with MBTI and Hogan, and has done coaching work using both instruments.



In addition, Ms. Wei has extensive training and professional experience in quantitative and qualitative research and conducted research work in China and the US. In her ten years of teaching in China and the U.S., she taught students of various age and ethnic groups. Her articles on one-child policy were published in the US in 2007, and she has multiple translated works published in China and is continuously introducing western education practices and theories into China.

Ms. Wei has a doctoral degree in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University, and a master degree in Culture and Human Development from Harvard University. She also holds an MA from the University of International Business and Economics (Beijing) and a BA from the Dalian University of Technology.

## Jim Wang

Jim Wang works as an investment banker for Rodman and Renshaw in New York City. His day to day work is the execution of public market and private transactions for Chinese companies listed in the US, where his cultural background plays an important advantage. Jim speaks and reads fluent Mandarin, despite emigrating to California at the age of 9. His background growing up in the US lends an important angle to our clients who are already enrolled in American schools. His many honors in high school include National Merit Commended Scholar and AP Scholar with Distinction. He credits the mentors in his life who have helped him along the path of education achievement and career development, including Kent, when their paths crossed at Capital Today. It is his wish to play the same role to the younger generation of students.



Jim graduated from University of California, Berkeley with Bachelors degree in Political Science and Business Administration. He received his Masters degree from Columbia University in Economics and Education with a scholarship from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

## Mr. Joe Xiongwei Zhou

Mr. Zhou is a executive director of EL Capital. He has over 14 years multi-cultural and multi-national work experience. In the U.S., he was a manager at Delta Search Labs, a technology development and commercialization incubator company, where he was responsible for development and evaluation of new business opportunities, including a startup that utilizes virtual reality technology in applications of pain management. Before that, Mr. Zhou worked as a technical lead at Kasenna Inc and then as a custom engineer at Silicon Graphics Inc. In China, he was a co-founder and Vice General Manager to build Japan Takagi Living Goods (textile) Corporation and managed the daily operations of both the business branch and the manufacturing plant. In Japan, Mr. Zhou gained project management and quality control skills by working at Yokogawa Electric Corporation for 2 years.



Mr. Zhou studied in the MIT Sloan Fellows Program in Innovation and Global Leadership, a demanding and accelerated full-time MBA program for mid-career executives and entrepreneurs. He also holds a Master degree in Mechanical Engineering from Iowa State University and a Bachelor degree in Precision Engineering from Tianjin University, China.