

# The Computer is My Family's Tool for Education and Connecting with the World

Tina Fang

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Discuss the graphic. What are the ways you and/or your children use technology as a tool?

When my children do their homework, they use the Internet. I saw my eight-year-old daughter do a school research project on animals. She found a picture of a river otter and then she was able to draw it herself and write down facts about it. She learned a lot of information about the animal that I could not have learned when I was her age.

I encourage my three daughters, 8, 9, and 10 to use the computer to learn many things. For example, they use My Skills Tutor to practice reading, grammar, and math for an hour each day on the weekend. (I have an account with My Skills Tutor from my adult education program.)

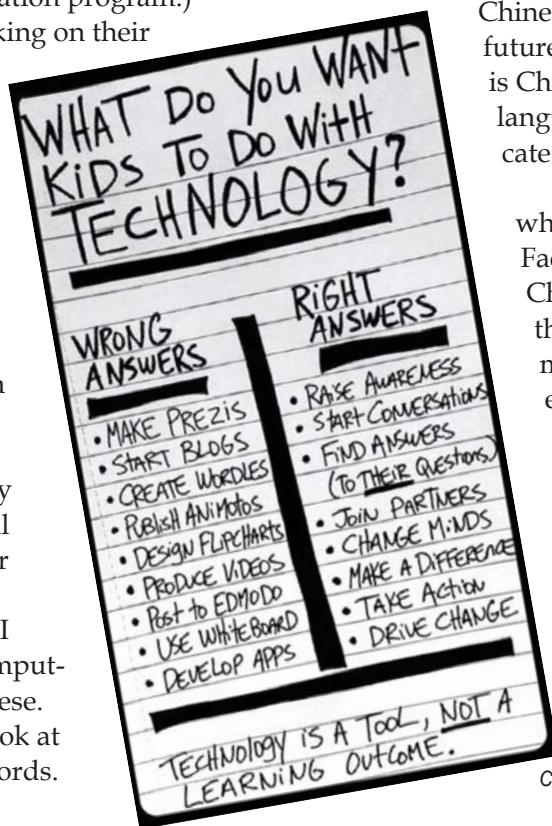
After they finish working on their academic skills, they can play computer games or practice typing. They enjoy <[www.mathplayground.com](http://www.mathplayground.com)>, <[www.sumdog.com](http://www.sumdog.com)>, and <[www.pbskids.com](http://www.pbskids.com)>. On the weekends, they are allowed to go to these websites for one hour each day if they have studied one hour first. Sometimes they ask why they can only visit educational sites. I tell them, "The computer is for studying not playing."

Since they were four, I have had them use the computer to learn Mandarin Chinese. We use the computer to look at the meaning of Chinese words.



Sometimes they don't want to practice, but I tell them that China is growing quickly, and knowing Chinese will help them find a job in the future. I also tell them that our family is Chinese and they should know the language so that they can communicate with their relatives.

Also, we use <[www.qq.com](http://www.qq.com)>, which is like a Chinese version of Facebook, to talk with my family in China and with my friends around the world. My sister has never met my daughters, but on the computer they can see each other. Using the computer is very enjoyable. It supports my children's education, and it makes the world smaller.



Tina Fang (pictured above with her three children) is a student at the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative in Providence, RI, where she is enrolled in a National External Diploma Program class. She is a native of China and has lived in the U.S. for 15 years.