

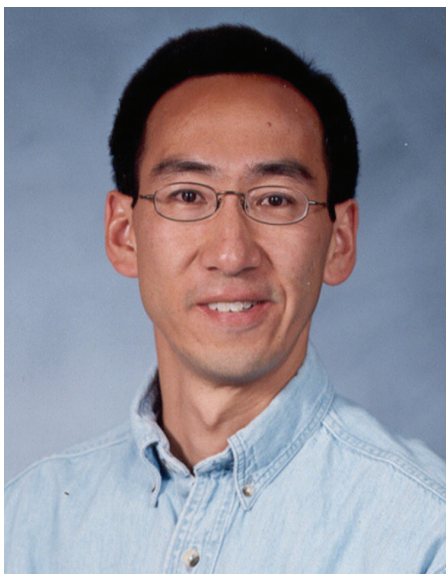
kids into seeing the wrong strategies in order to encourage them to seek out better, less obvious ones. My problems teach kids to become better, more patient problem-solvers while developing both their number sense and computational skills.

In your book *Math Fables Too* you hoped to encourage kids to become more interested in science. Have you added science elements to any of your other books?

I try to sneak interesting science concepts into my books whenever possible. For example, one of the poems in my book *Math Potatoes* describes a star as “a window into yesterday.” Here’s why. If a star is 10 light years away, it means that the light we see today emanated from that star 10 years ago and is just now reaching us. This means we’re actually looking at the star as it appeared 10 years ago, which may be different from what it looks like today. Now isn’t that an interesting concept? We’re actually looking into the past in real time! Science is fascinating, and when kids are exposed to it early they can’t help but love it.

You say “there is a right way to learn basic math operations.” How have you used your books to do this?

When I say there’s a “right way” to solve problems, my focus is on developing children’s thinking skills so they’ll be ready for higher math when they’re older. Many people focus on getting the answer to the specific problem at hand. My concern is not just solving that problem correctly, but being able to solve every other problem as well, especially harder ones! A good strategy produces the right answer quickly and efficiently, and can also be used



Author Greg Tang

to solve a whole range of problems, not just a few. My books focus on fundamental grouping strategies that generalize easily to numbers of all sizes. My goal is for kids to become good at math, which means they have to be good with all numbers — not just small numbers.

***Math Street Smarts* shows another form of “multiple literacy.” Do you plan to make more YouTube *Math Street Smarts* videos?**

I want to do a whole series of videos that will help kids and adults quickly see how easy math can be. Most people think of math as formulas to memorize, word problems that don’t make sense, and a lot of other things that make them uncomfortable. With my *Street Smarts* videos, I try to provide a little humor, a little entertainment, and a little clever thinking in a short, easy-to-digest couple of minutes. We actually shot a lot of great videos but unfortunately my publisher lost the tapes! I hope to shoot more this fall when the students are back in Boston.

You have created the *Kakooma™* iPhone App. Do you plan on creating more apps?

Last summer, I started a company to take all of my teaching ideas and combine them with new technologies to make cool math games and activities for kids. *Kakooma™* was our first app, and we’re planning to create many more. We’ve created a whole family of *Kakooma™* puzzles, including easier addition puzzles, harder puzzles that have positive and negative numbers, and puzzles based on multiplication instead of addition. You’ll be seeing a whole family of *Kakooma™* apps some day!

Do you have plans to write another math book?

I hope to write many more math books and a series of science books as well. But before then, I have to finish my current project. I’m putting all of the math materials I’ve ever created on a new website, including animated and interactive versions of my eight picture books, my entire line of *Kakooma™* puzzles, the math strategy games I’ve invented, and all the teaching materials I’ve written over the years. The website is www.gregtangmath.com and I hope it will help get kids hooked on math. Who says math can’t be so fun that kids end up loving it? That’s my goal. ■