



USE THIS PAGE >>>

Be a Virtual Visit Virtuoso!

Step up your game for your next Skype visit following these seven simple rules of thumb from Jennifer Kelley Reed, an extension of this month's article "The Value of Virtual Visits" (page 11).

A Good Virtual Visit...

- **Requires the right technology.**

All that is needed is a device with a camera, but additional tools will enhance the connection. An interactive white board or ceiling mounted projector is ideal, but in their absence, adding an audio system (or speakers) and a webcam can suffice.

- **Results when students create and adopt norms regarding virtual visits.**

Help students rework norms into positive language, i.e., look at the speaker, raise your hand...

- **Ensures that the students in your school can easily see and be seen.**

Create a space conducive to Skype connections. Consider the purchase of additional VGA cables and USB extenders to create distance between the projector and laptop or laptop and webcam.

- **Demands that all parties come prepared.**

Students should be familiar with the topic or materials or understand the purpose of the connection. Prepping students in advance readies them for learning and exploring.

- **Is interactive and involves sharing ideas.**

If it is with an author or illustrator, he or she gets the students to solicit ideas for art for a story.

- **Includes a solid question and answer segment.**

Students should prepare some questions in advance, especially if the connection is with an author, illustrator, or expert in the field. Shorter answers ensure that all learners stay engaged.

- **Ends at the appropriate moment.**

Know when to end the visit. Keep connections at thirty minutes maximum for kindergarten through grade two and forty-five minutes for grades three through five.

