

## A Virtual Author Reading in Your Classroom via Skype? You Bet!

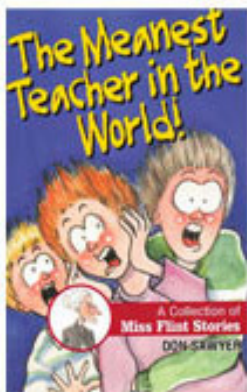
You wouldn't think the kids would have a ball with *The Meanest Teacher in the World*, but it happens when the book's author, Don Sawyer, Skypes the whole classroom. His books (*The Meanest Teacher in the World* and *Miss Flint Meets the Great Kveskin*) are fun on their own, but it gets even more interesting when students fire questions at the author.

Here's what Michael Walkington, principal of Bessborough Drive Elementary School in Toronto, wrote last year about Don's presentation – and the first use of the Skype-ing technique in his school:

*"What a great way to use technology to excite the students about learning. It encouraged and engaged the reluctant readers, and it gave the learning a live event to look forward to and provided a forum to understand the author's intent and motivation. It was a tremendous success with our learners of the 21st Century. I strongly recommend such an activity for a comprehensive reading program. . ."*



Virtual author readings are cost-effective, easily arranged, technically surprisingly simple, flexible, and fun. Don, a seasoned teacher, is able to engage learners in writing workshop activities, enthuse young writers, and discuss the writing process clearly and entertainingly.



Don's virtual author tours usually last between 45-60 minutes but sometimes everyone has so much fun they go on even longer.

**Does it work?** Here are the comments from Mindy Gatt, a fifth grade teacher at Toronto's Northlea Elementary & Middle School:

*"It was a fantastic experience -- especially for those who have never used the technology. The kids love your stories. They really are truly laugh-out-loud funny!"*

Library readings or classroom activities are perfect settings for Skype sessions. For more information about setting up a Skype session with Don Sawyer, please visit [www.playfortpublishing.ca](http://www.playfortpublishing.ca) or contact Louise Wallace at [louise@playfortpublishing.ca](mailto:louise@playfortpublishing.ca) or phone 250-833-5554.