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Professor Sugata Mitra On Teaching Spelling And Grammar: Phones Have Made It Unnecessary

Huffington Post | By Rebecca Klein

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Well, this is an opinion you don't often hear in the education world.

Acclaimed professor and educational researcher [Sugata Mitra suggested in an interview with British education magazine TES that he no longer thinks it's entirely necessary for kids to learn spelling and grammar](#). He credits the proliferation of new technologies, such as the "autocorrect" feature on mobile phones, for phasing out such curricula.

"Firstly, my phone corrects my spelling so I don't really need to think about it and, secondly, because I often skip grammar and write in a cryptic way," Mitra told the magazine last week.

He added, "My entire background tells me, 'No, no, it is really bad what you are saying,' but I think there is a change and we have to learn to live with it."

[Mitra](#), a professor of educational technology at Newcastle University in the U.K., is well known for his "[Hole in the Wall](#)" experiment, in which he installed a computer into the wall of a poor Indian slum to see who would be most attracted to the machine. He found that [curious children were the most frequent users of the computer, and that they eventually taught themselves how to surf the Internet](#).

It appears, however, that the professor's ideas about spelling and grammar have not elicited positive responses. On Saturday he tweeted:



Sugata Mitra
@Sugatam

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I am getting rude mail, in perfect English, about this:...

fb.me/2NjX3M9Es

3:48 AM - 3 Aug 2013

Lessons in spelling 'have no place in 21st century schools' -...

Schools should stop providing lessons in spelling and grammar because children can correct linguistic errors on their mobile phones, according to a leading academic.

 The Telegraph @Telegraph



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His remarks come only a few months after [England's education ministers introduced a new, nationally required spelling and grammar test](#) for students. Education minister Elizabeth Truss told The Guardian that the [test is designed to help ensure that kids can communicate effectively](#).

"That is why employers bemoan the poor literacy of so many school and college leavers," she said. "This new test will mean that children are again taught the skills they need to understand our language, and to use it properly, creatively and effectively."