

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the recently retracted article in Higher Education. In November of 2014, I was notified by one of the primary editors of the journal that there was an issue with my article and I was asked to submit a response. I was confused when I initially saw the email, but once I more carefully read the issue outlined by the editor and another author, I realized I had made a mistake. I immediately contacted the other author and the editor and outlined how the error was made. In summary, I was a discussant for a session at a conference several years earlier (2012). While reading the papers for the session, I noticed one paper cited several reports and articles on a topic of interest, and I knew I needed to note and obtain those sources. I made notes from the paper in a separate document and failed to indicate the conference paper as the original source. As a result, when I returned to that document many months later, I failed to recognize that the paper included a handful of sentences drawn directly from the conference paper, without proper attribution. I apologized to the author and assured him that I had high regard for his work and would never intentionally slight him or his work. In my note to the editor and the author, I suggested that either the article be retracted, that the author be added to the article as a co-author, or that an error sheet be produced to cite his conference paper in the sentences containing the error of omission.

In January 2015, the editor informed me that the editors decided to retract the article and provided the text for the retraction notice. The text of the notice was quite detailed and accurate; it highlighted that the portions of my article that had omitted citations were limited to the introduction and first few pages. It was reassuring that the retraction notice clearly noted that my error did not include someone's findings or an egregious slight on someone else's good work. I asked that the statement be slightly revised to note that the conference paper was based on the author's dissertation, as I had never seen or read the dissertation. Although the editor confirmed and accepted my amendment, the amended notice was not published (in May 2015, the editor said in an email that I did not confirm his confirmation which is why the original version was published).

Ultimately, I think the editor made the right choice, which was an extension to one of my initial suggestions. It is unfortunate that my unintentional error was of a nature that the paper is no longer part of the literature; it is also unfortunate that the other author's work was not cited. This scenario was an important reminder to approach the work of research and writing with great care at every step of the process, especially when taking notes that may not be synthesized for many months.

Professionally, this process has been difficult and has included a level of negative exposure. Prior to the retraction, I contacted several of my closest colleagues and coauthors to inform them of the impending notice. All of the responses were quite encouraging; they reminded me to be diligent in approaching research and writing with care, and assured that this mistake was one anyone could make.

During the process, the editor of the journal sent several communications that were somewhat abrupt; when we attended a conference together, he told me he would not discuss the matter with me. In spite of these interactions, I have since been asked to review several articles by the journal and another editor at the journal asked me to contribute a section on a comprehensive project on higher education with Oxford University Press. Both of these instances have been professionally encouraging after such a discouraging experience.

On a personal level, the months that passed in between communications about decisions regarding the manuscript led to a lot of self-doubt and a crisis in identity in regards to scholarship and the life of the mind. Close colleagues introduced me to Brené Brown's work, which highlights the difference between guilt and shame. Brown generally defines guilt as something that can be helpful; a failure can be compared to an individual's set of values and standards and the discomfort can be used for growth. Shame is the feeling of being deeply flawed or unworthy and is an unhelpful set of feelings (for a more detailed description, see Brown's 2012 book, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* or the blog, <http://brenebrown.com/2013/01/14/2013114shame-v-guilt-html/>).

On a deeper level, this series of events caused me to think about my self-perception and life purpose through a different lens. Although I deeply regret my oversight, I have been reminded that my journey of faith requires me to live for something much greater than my individual accomplishments and failures. I realized I had placed much of my identity and my faith in temporary successes instead of a more eternal purpose. Although I am committed to my scholarship, this experience has altered my perspective and disposition in a way that has made my work more congruent with other aspects of my life, beliefs, and epistemology.