

Letter from a plagiarizer [writing an essay was part of the CJC's sactions]

Plagiarism is undisputedly, a most egregious academic offense. Unfortunately, I found that out the hard way. I cannot even begin to describe how unpleasant the experience was for me. Under any circumstances, plagiarism is a very poor choice of strategy. So why did I plagiarize other people's work? I thought that I could get away with it! However, our professors are experienced, well-read, and perfectly capable of differentiating between the work of an undergraduate and that of amore advanced and more practiced writer.

Under time pressure, the temptation to plagiarize was strong because all sources and information were readily available and it seemed like the easy way out. I chose to ignore the consequences because it was convenient at the time. Had I thought about the consequences, before and not after plagiarizing and getting caught - I would have definitely done things differently. I would have thought about the consequences more carefully only to realize that they were to my detriment. Even as a strategy of desperation, you should not plagiarize.

Handing in work late, asking for an extension before the deadline or obtaining an average grade on a paper are all better and safer options than plagiarizing. At the time, I thought that by plagiarizing I would save time and effort but in fact, I expended more effort covering up the dishonesty and experienced more anxiety over the thought of getting caught.

Furthermore, the humiliation of getting caught, especially by a professor I had initially sought to impress, and the embarrassment of having committed such a dishonest act, deserving of suspension or expulsion were un bearable. Guilty of plagiarism and having to admit to it in front of a disciplinary committee was an extremely stressful experience. From the moment the professor suspected me of having committed plagiarism until the hearing, I had undergone a psychologically draining period that had drastically affected my overall academic performance. I was constantly thinking of the grave repercussions of my action.

You take huge risks when you plagiarize other people's work, the least of which is risking failure in a course. In more serious cases, you risk suspension or expulsion. Once the committee decides on a penalty, there are further difficulties. Whatever it is you wish to do after graduation - be it graduate school or employment - the admissions or future employers will question you about the discrepancy in your academic record.

By plagiarizing I have failed to realize that learning to express yourself in your own words is an integral part of the learning experience. Plagiarism is a hindrance to your development as a writer, a major impediment to your intellectual growth because you become dependent on other people's work and your work eventually lacks creativity, individuality and originality.

To sum it up, plagiarism is not even worth a moment of consideration and it can only work against you. To avoid situations that lead to plagiarism, the best approach is to start your work early and if you encounter any problems visit the writing center or take advantage of your professor's office hours. You must be well-informed about how to acknowledge other people's work if you chose to incorporate them in your own writing. However, if you are not fully informed, start consulting the documentation on plagiarism now.