The Teaching Profession and Ethics of Care

La profesión docente y la ética del cuidado

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Abstract

This article deals with the teaching profession not only within the ethics of care, as understood by N. Noddings, but also as a public service and privileged scenario of applied ethics. Caring for other citizens and for real men and women is a key in ethics and a pending demand in the developed societies of our time. Therefore, it is necessary to open up public discussion on promoting caring teachers so that teachers and students acquire the skills to listen and address the interests and needs of the individuals who use education services. The methodological procedure used in the article can be none other than critical hermeneutics. It has been used to detect shared ethical principles and civic values of caring which are so needed in social life.

Key words: teaching profession, ethics of care, applied ethics, civic ethics.

Resumen

El presente artículo trata de la profesión docente en el marco de la ética del cuidado, tal como es entendida por N. Noddings; y de la profesión docente como servicio público y escenario privilegiado de la ética aplicada. El cuidado por los otros ciudadanos, hombres y mujeres de carne y hueso, es una clave de la ética y una exigencia insatisfecha en las sociedades desarrolladas de nuestro tiempo. Por lo tanto, es necesario abrir el escenario de la discusión pública sobre el cultivo docente del cuidado para que el profesorado y los estudiantes adquieran las competencias de escuchar y atender los intereses y necesidades de los sujetos usuarios de sus servicios. El procedimiento metodológico, que se usa en el artículo, no puede ser otro que la hermenéutica crítica, para detectar principios éticos y valores cívicos compartidos sobre el cuidado, tan necesario en la vida social.

Palabras clave: profesión docente, ética del cuidado, ética aplicada, ética cívica.

1. The teaching profession in today's complex societies

Whatever description is used, the present-day conception of *profession* speaks of an institutionalized social activity that provides a series of assets or services which society needs. Specialized, acknowledged training is required to practice it, and a profession is held by a group of people who establish the appropriate norms to practice this profession through certain ethical codes (Hortal, 2002).

Professions have always emerged, and still emerge today, in response to social needs. Therefore it could well be stated that they are dynamic realities. Depending on the circumstances, professions modify goals, the ways to approach them, and the relationships between professional colleagues and users. Professionals have acquired certain socially recognized skills to provide either an asset or a service to others and to society. Some examples of such are helping maintain or improving health, providing legal counseling, collaborating in children's educational process, resolving family conflicts or planning means of communication between different places. Professionals earn their living by undertaking any of these activities. The social and moral importance of practicing a profession lies in the specific asset that they contribute to society in general or to its members.

The fact that professionals perform well or practice a profession means that professionals acquire an ethical character or personality while contributing a service to others and to society at the same time. Therefore, it is important to revitalize professions by remembering their genuine purposes and the exact skills required to accomplish them. When professionals acquire and practice their skills particularly well, they learn to be citizens and moral people. *Excellent professionals* are those who compete with themselves to offer a good professional product; they do not settle for professional mediocrity, but aim to show excellency in the service they offer to real people who need them as users of their profession. Thus, we need to center on this moral revolution of day-to-day life (Cortina, 2000) if

we want professions and professionals to contribute to a decent, vigorous civil society.

This historic time at which teaching is currently undertaken is characterized by structural interdependence. The planet and humanity are jointly affected by a system of interdependences in terms of economic, cultural, political and religious relationships. In other words, interdependency has to be accepted as a reality that urgently demands the corresponding answers to ensure our own survival and that of humanity. This state of interdependence in which we find ourselves has generated the obligation to survive together, to maintain and improve our living conditions in the small and well punished planet that we all share, and to make life, particularly human life, dignified in all the forms it takes (Escamez, 2004). When interdependency is acknowledged as such, its corresponding moral response is solidarity and *ethics of care.*

Ethics of care understands humans as a relational being, and it rejects the idea of solitude and self-centered beings. In ethics of care, the human subject does not shut out others, but is linked to a social reality and to other human beings. He or she is not completely independent and needs others in situations which involve aspects of lack or vulnerability. This subject also needs others to not only acknowledge him or her in all other situations, and that others bring meaning to his or her actions and projects. Besides, human actions involve others; that is, the actions of a person or a group increase or limit the possibilities of action taken by others. Therefore, the ontological fact of interdependence is said to lead to the same caring practice being learnt in accordance with the conditions of the possibility created in specific interpersonal relationships.

Teaching is an occupational activity and has all the characteristics that define a profession: a) it provides a specific service to society; b) it is a social activity that is entrusted to and carried out by a group of people who are constantly dedicated to this activity and who earn a living by it; c) teachers enter this profession after going through a long training process which is essential for them to qualify to practice it; and d) teachers form an organized group (professional associations and trade unions) who have gained, or attempt to gain, the monopolistic control of practicing this profession.

The teaching profession is a relational profession. It is characterized by being an activity in which teachers are not only responsible for facilitating students' development in all the facets of their personality, but also committed to establish and maintain relationships based on trust and care which are fundamental to achieve this. The most valuable products of the teaching-learning process are, above all, those of a relational kind, such as intellectual enthusiasm, shared satisfaction upon discovering or facing new material, and safe experiences in a classroom that boasts an environment of understanding and courtesy (Noddings, 2003 b).

From the ethics of care perspective, good professional teaching includes creating relationships based on mutual trust that enable teachers to know their students and to consider educational interventions in accordance with their students' interests and needs. Teaching professionals are invited to design their intervention based on questions of the type that follows: how can the subject matter that I teach cover all my students' needs?, how can I help my students in furthering their intelligence and their affects?, how can I get on well with most of my students?, how can I help them to care about themselves, other human beings, animals, natural environments, human-made environments and the wonderful world of ideas? (Noddings, 1992).

Teachers who practice teaching well are also ethical citizens as they contribute to generate social capital in the civil community to which they belong. Good teaching practices help build citizens' trust in professionals and their professional colleagues, and also fulfill social expectations as to the meaning of the profession and its reliability to resolve personal and social problems. When a society's social capital abounds, the relationships among its members become easier, this society's energies become more dynamical and human development ensues.

The teaching practices that generate social capital are those that embody the values of public ethics; that is, those practices that promote the autonomy of professionals and users alike, horizontal relationships between members of society, and respect between the stakeholders of the educational community. (Cortina, 2001).

The values of public ethics, such a person's dignity, justice, liberty, equality, solidarity, tolerance or active respect, participation in public issues, peace and responsibility, are basic values that everyone must have so that shortcomings of humanity do not become apparent. Such values must be present in human relationships for us to be able to say that an ethical climate exists in them. These values are the basis of human rights (Escamez, 2004): the value of human dignity is the huge trunk that supports all human rights; the value of liberty is specified and broken down into human rights of a civil and political kind (the first generation of human rights); the value of equality is specified and broken down into human rights of a social and economic kind (the second generation of human rights); the value of solidarity is specified and broken down into human rights which include a healthy environment, peace and the development of capacities of both individuals and people (the third generation of human rights).

Practicing public ethics is beneficial for society as a whole; it is a public asset because it helps form habits based on trust and solidarity. Good teaching and professional ethical practices are one of the powerful flows that puts societies on a par with human dignity.

We believe that ethics-penetrated teaching is on a par with human dignity and, consequently, is both gratifying and satisfactory at the same time; that is, it establishes a profound sense of satisfaction in students and teachers alike, and simultaneously leads to satisfactory results. One of the outstanding pioneers in the field of education in terms of ethics of care is Nel Noddings (2001). She stated that academic success without positive affect is void of morals and esthetics.

There is so much concern in present-day schools about reaching curricular targets in relation to academic subjects that it is easy to forget those matters which students are genuinely concerned about, and which are related with education in the genuine sense: giving and receiving care, which results in teachers' and student's well-being and self-realization. Students need to know that teachers as both professionals and people actually worry about them (Noddings, 1992). Therefore apart from teachers providing certain academic knowledge, it is necessary to develop interpersonal relationships with new ways of interpreting reality, with new values and attitudes, and with quality performance which enriches everyone.

2. The teaching practice as applied ethics

Other than being a technical practice, the teaching practice is an ethical practice in the sense that it creates or updates adequate social assets. An ethical professional practice is a morally informed action; therefore, practices are not a means to produce assets or the values to which they aspire, but a place where they are embodied and where values are lived out (Puig, 2003), for instance: respect for the dignity of those who use the teaching service; the help they are given; the responsibility toward them and toward the social community which guarantees their needs being satisfied through competent professional services (Chavez, 2008); collaboration to make users become responsible for their life, for overcoming their problems, and for dialog from recognizing others as elected delegates.

Recognizing all subjects in the educational community, or recognizing all those who are affected by the decisions made in the educational community, as an elected delegate is consubstantial to applied ethics. What has to be done in teaching has to be shaped in different spheres of life, in commissions, in committees, in codes and in the field of public opinion; which constitute moral intersubjectivity which is discovered through reflection and action (Domingo, 2008).

Applied ethics, as in the case of teaching ethics, arise from public reflection. Their task consists in resolving public matters and they play a key role in fulfilling public deliberation (Conill, J., 2003).

The field of public opinion is an indispensable institution of civil society in the pluralist political community. What should come over in education in a fair State is based on neither the particular will of a sovereign nor a particular group, but on a

rational will that everyone could wish for. Therefore, *reasoning publicity* is essential.[1]

Teaching professionals must promote the responsibility of each member of the classroom toward classmates, family and society with a view to developing ethical commitment (Escamez, J. and Gil, R., 2001). Their interventions should aim to create the sense of willingness that helps care for others, and encourage the will for real participation in public matters that positions members of the political community as leading figures and converts those individuals who are the object of aid into subjects who collaborate among these members. Teachers should encourage personal autonomy among students because nothing but learning will improve the levels of awareness and personal decisions (Escamez, 2007) in those matters that concern someone.

We assume that teaching professionals have acquired not only knowledge and skills, but also ways of doing things, a feeling of belonging to a professional group and a sense of tradition centered on providing the best type of service that professionals usually offer. As part of the socialization within their professional group, teachers acquire the sense of what being a good professional is, their exact obligations and the manner to interpret them in the present but based on a history of professional practice based on their best achievements, their deviations or their incorrect practices (Hortal, 2003).

It is not possible to take a general moral approach of what should be done in all professions. Instead, professional teaching ethics have to be built upon their own sources. The first source comprises those teachers who propose norms or codes from the specific knowledge of the service and the social purpose that they offer, from professional responsibilities, and from experience which has been confirmed by good practices in ways to act and by facing teaching-learning problems. The second source includes the ethical thinkers' theories or moral reflections which have been dedicated to applied ethics. The third source consists in the users of the teaching service in all the forms it takes: students, family, educational institutions, employers and the various institutions in which the plural wealth of today's complex societies is seen.

Therefore, this article maintains that professional teaching ethics in today's society of knowledge has to be constructed among all citizens; that is, those who are affected by the decisions made in the field of education and learning (Cortina, 2003). The decisions taken in the present-day education system affect all citizens in one way or another. This suggests the demand of assuming the perspective of the expert, and (in its particular case) the perspective of the trade union's or school's representative, and also the perspective of all those who are affected by the decisions made as they are not simply beneficiaries of these decisions (just as an enlightened despotism fancied), but also autonomous subjects who are authorized and have the right to extensively participate in this decision making.

The fact that all the people involved actually participate is necessary in real democracy and in a vigorous civil society.

As we previously mentioned, considering a subject as an elected delegate to shape professional teaching ethics constitutes the common background for all applied ethics because in them, the person who is affected, as a last resort, has the right to exhibit his/her interests. Furthermore, only those norms that fulfill universalized interests must be considered to be authorized.

From this perspective, the teaching ethics in a complex society of knowledge like our own must cover at least five reference points (Cortina, 2003):

1) the social goals through which society makes sense;
2) the suitable mechanisms to meet these goals in a modern society;
3) the legal-political framework that corresponds to society, as specified in the constitution and in the complementary legislation currently in force;
4) the demands made by the civil morals that present-day society has reached and,
5) the demands of the critical hermeneutics as a frame to support the norms related to ethical actions.

From a relational point of view, the professional teaching practice consists in receiving, listening and knowing the other person in order to act in favor of the needs expressed by this person. Noddings (2005) considered the relevance of distinguishing between expressed needs and inferred needs. On occasion, the most profound needs remain hidden and are not expressed, even by those who have them. Therefore, it is important to develop genuine interpersonal relationships to listen, even in silence, to the other person's needs. Expressed needs are those that come from a person who receives care, and are communicated through verbal and non verbal language, unlike inferred needs which derive from someone else who has to receive care.

3. Teaching goals and contents

As the first illustrated model proposed, teaching has attempted to transmit science, the scientific view of the world, or at least to prepare students to obtain access to this scientific view of the world. Humanity expected science to remedy its material and social ills. However, time has made it clear that this is not the case.

We expect schools to also provide education to people in such a way that they can fully participate in life and in the culture of the society into which they were born (Hortal, 2000). In fact, we expect much more, perhaps too much; every time something does not work in society, we expect education to make it work: compensatory education is brought in when social inequalities emerge; road safety education is introduced when there are traffic accidents; environmental or sustainable development education is proposed when the natural environment deteriorates; when we hear of cases of domestic violence, then education for

equality appears, intercultural conflicts or citizen violence arise, and education for citizenship commences, etc.

Some years ago, Fernando Savater (1997) posed a very relevant question: what can be taught and what must be learnt in schools? Certainly if we were to attempt to provide an ample philosophical reply, the effort involved would be overwhelming as we would face the problem of the purposes of education. One reflection on the purposes of education is that on the destiny of humans, about the place that humans occupy in nature, and about the relationships between human beings: the profoundness of the social change that is currently taking place means that we have to reformulate the basic questions into the purposes of education, about whose responsibility it is to educate new generations, and about what cultural legacy, what values, and which of man's and society's conceptions do we wish to transmit (Garcia, Escamez, Martinez and Martinez Usarralde, 2008). Such effort would take us a long way and, perhaps, along quite unpractical courses to orientate teachers in such a complex and plural society like our own in terms of the conceptions of a good life.

Savater (1997), recommended us to reach the educational Greek ideal to find some relevant answer for this society of knowledge in which we live. Greeks distinguished functions, and this idea still persists today among some teachers: that which separates education in itself on the one hand, and teaching on the other. Both were practiced by a specific teaching figure: pedagogs and teachers. The former was a domestic servant who lived with children and teenagers, taught them about the values of the city, prepared their character and monitored the development of their moral integrity. Conversely, the teacher collaborated externally with the family and was in charge of teaching children a series of instrumental knowledge such as reading, writing and arithmetic. The pedagog's work was considered prime and was highly esteemed, whereas the teacher's work was that of a simple instructor whose role was considered secondary.

No matter how much some people still insist, nowadays the comparison between *education* and *instruction* is markedly obsolete and highly deceiving in terms of the contents to be taught and what must be learnt in the education system:

> "No-one would dare seriously maintain that a citizen's public and ethical autonomy may be conceived in the ignorance of all that which is required for a person to cope professionally. How can someone learn scientific knowledge without being instilled respect for such human values as truth, exactness or curiosity? Is anyone able to learn techniques or arts without learning what social coexistence implies at the same time, and without learning what men either yearn for or fear?" (Savater, 1977,p.p. 47-48).

Ethics of care invites teachers of the different disciplines to expand and go more deeply into their affective relationships through the target study matter by exploring their connections with other course subjects, individual lives and existential questions. In this way, students could demonstrate their true enthusiasm for the

course subject, while teachers could encourage positive affect responses on their students' part to their subject matter.

One proposal to explore such connections is to create a repertoire of stories or narrations. Teachers collect stories from the scientific, literary or personal literature which also fit in with the course subjects taught by other teachers. This system favors the interdisciplinary work between teaching staff, and the interest in matters that are important for life and which go beyond the division of disciplines.

This may well lead teaching staff and students alike to experience renewed enthusiasm to teach and learn through the use of stories or narrations which encourage the appearance of affective responses to the learning-teaching contents. Having considered the students' interests, the literature that teachers choose must fulfill two basic criteria: be well recognized as a high quality work, and teachers should find it sufficiently stimulating (Noddings, 1996).

The social goal in teaching consists in transmitting culture and preparing critical people. This is precisely the asset that endorses teaching and which has to be scrupulously respected by those who teach if they intend to become ethically competent teachers. Nonetheless, the teacher of today's society of knowledge has to pay particular attention to the second part of the social goal: the development or encouragement of critical thought among students; it has to do with the development of rationality, and involves not only helping students understand what makes reasoning good, but also improving students' skills to observe and infer, generalize, propose hypotheses, think up alternatives, assess affirmations, detect problems and realize what the appropriate action to take is. Evidently, acquiring critical thought also involves certain attitudes such as intellectual curiosity, objectivity, flexibility, honesty and respect for others' viewpoints.

The development or encouragement of critical thought among students means that the teacher is expected to: a) encourage debate among students and prepare them to give and request reasons, thus generating public thought; b) consider knowledge as the results of problems which worried people living in former periods or those who live in the present age; and above all, c) show truthful honesty and point out just how much remains unknown in the field that is being studied.

Today we have accurate guidelines about and unquestionable authority for the social goals of teaching ethics. We refer to the international reports made by the committees which have been set up for this purpose. It is most certainly necessary in applied ethics, such as professional teaching ethics, to listen to the voices of those people who work rigorously and seriously in different fields, who are concerned about their work being completed, and who pay attention to the level of public ethics that our society has reached. It is precisely in the discovery of these shared values, and in speculating responsible responses from such values, that both national and international committees and the ethics committees of public institutions have become committed and discover how a minimum of moral

agreements go beyond frontiers and form transnational public ethics (Cortina, 2003).

Regarding the social goals that ethically endorse the teaching profession, the report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors, establishes these social goals: "In order to accomplish its own series of missions, education must be arranged around four fundamental pillars of learning which will be, to some extent, the pillars of learning for everybody throughout their lifetime: learning to know, that is, acquiring instruments of comprehension; learning to do in order to influence one's own surroundings; learning to live together to participate and cooperate with others in all human activities; and finally, learning to be, which includes the previous three elements" (Delors, 1996: 95-96).

On a *page* further on in the same work (p.109), there is an excellent summary of the social goals, or service, that the teaching professional must provide users of his/her profession with: *learning to know* by combining a sufficiently ample general culture with the possibility of concentrating knowledge into a small number of course subjects. This also entails *learning to learn* in order to make the best of the possibilities that education offers throughout life. That is, *learning to do* for the purpose of acquiring not only a professional qualification, but in a more general sense, to acquire a competence that prepares the individual to face a good number of situations and to work as a team; then there is the *learning to do* in the framework of either different social experiences or the work that is offered to young adults and adolescents. *Learning to live together* is about developing the understanding of others and the perception of forms of interdependence, undertaking joint projects and preparing oneself to deal with conflicts, respecting the values of pluralism, plus mutual comprehension and peace. *Learning to be* so that one's personality flourishes more. So one is in good condition to work with the increasing possibility of autonomy, judgment and personal responsibility. And all this so we do not underestimate each individual's possibilities in education.

In formal education systems, it is not necessary to prioritize knowledge acquisition at the expense of other forms of learning; it is important to conceive education as a whole. Education for the ethics of care defends the affects and emotions pertaining to the educational process since they are capable of enhancing passion for learning, relieving the feeling of isolation, and improving class performance. Learning through the use of reason must not make us ignore the role that feelings and emotions play in the same learning process and in interpreting reality; so education needs to make a balance among reason, affect and emotions possible (Noddings, 1996).

4. The teaching practice as an interpersonal encounter

Teaching ethics involves an interpersonal encounter: it is a prospect for care and one that involves everyone because it implies participating in a relationship which entails the complete receptivity of someone else (Noddings, 2003b). The education process commences in the relationship established between teachers and students; no sooner than conversation begins than it has a bearing on learning. Professional intervention begins during the encounter itself. Here the organization of experience is initiated, the meaning or the non-meaning of the school itself is perceived, and trust or rejection among professionals and users is experienced. Systematic and intentional education is conceived as an interpersonal communication system where messages are selected and arranged in accordance with both specific purposes and the student's capacities for receptivity.

But what does this encounter entail for it to be characterized as a relationship of care, accompaniment or help? The ethical sense of willingness that makes this encounter possible entails learning to live together, learning to be, learning to do and, of course, learning to know (Delors,1996).

With *learning to live together*, it has been frequently understood that teacher's services boil down to only the educational pole in use. Undoubtedly, the technical content that the professional offers is essential, but ethical quality commences in the same relationship. There is no doubt whatsoever that all technical and scientific knowledge is required, but empathy and personal intuition are also needed. Quality teaching is based on knowing how to coordinate both elements.

Teaching, understood as a relationship that teachers use to help, accompany and care for students, includes both dimensions, and an interaction is created between the person who is able to provide help, the caregiver, and those who need to receive this help. It is a link which is revealed in the coming and going among the participants and which generates the help relationship. It is not merely a service that experts provide their clients with, but an interaction between experts and clients: the very teaching substance always occurs through this relationship (Yuren, 2005).

Consequently, learning is neither produced by the expert nor available as an object; instead it is elaborated during the interaction process by means of synergies among all those who intervene: experts or teachers and users or students. Should learning take place, it will always emerge as an effect from the relationship between the participating parties: teachers and students. In teaching, experts cannot build on a learning situation on their own, not even if the students accept their teaching. Learning only takes place if a relationship between the teacher and the student forms which unites them, like a bridge linking them.

Basically, the professional teacher is a driving force who activates students' vital dynamisms.

As for the second ethical sense of willingness, *learning to be*, the door that opens out on educational learning is competence as a professional; but above all, personal humility and teachers' respect when faced with a situation that is beyond them. Unlike other professions, teachers can expect neither the absolute security that concedes technical knowledge management, nor the absolute control of events. Teachers know that no-one holds the key to educational learning.

Education is filled with uncertainty. So education may be described as "an uncertain process with an uncertain result". Therefore arrogance displayed among teachers can never be validated because the logics of educational learning always encompasses additional complexity. For teaching professionals, admitting the meaning of their limits implies strong interior security that does not come up against some uncertainty in the means; a security which generates what Hans Jonas (1995) called the "courage of responsibility", the strength of hope that encourages us to make available all the efforts and means for students to learn, despite difficulties.

Regarding the third ethical sense of willingness, *learning to do*, the help need may be met by two ways: in the same way as the technique does, or in the same way as practical wisdom does. The technique's doing claims general validity, and it takes is support from an available project which is always carried following a uniform protocol.

The practical wisdom's doing involves deliberation with oneself and with others, and it is supported on the decision made from among several possible decisions. Deliberation consists in us all imaginatively analyzing the favorable and unfavorable consequences of the several possibilities available, and in choosing the most adequate possibility for all those involved in teaching-learning situations. It is not a matter of seeking the adequate means by which a set purpose is to be accomplished but, and above all, to conceive what must be and what must not be, what is more convenient and what is not.

The teaching profession obtains ethical quality when it is practiced as a practical wisdom filled with uncertainty given the complexity of human beings and their learning. It is necessary to move away from the perverse outline which implies that experts or teachers have the solution and that users or students have the problem.

With the fourth ethical *sense of willingness*, learning to learn, teachers must use their knowledge and skills to teach and help students to solve the problems which arise by endeavoring to offer students an expert and competent service that helps

students' technical, scientific and social understanding of the knowledge being taught.

However, teachers must not employ their professional knowledge and skills for unusual purposes, such as trafficking power, acquiring illegitimate social influence for their own good, or privileged information to obtain benefits that are alien to their professional services. The situation in which teachers use their knowledge and skills to do harm (the principle of malice) to the users of their services is one of the most serious offenses of professional ethics.

Teachers' veracity refers to the fact that their communication with people (students, colleagues, families, institutional representatives, etc.) has to be based on the delegates' convictions that everyone says what they believe is to be true. The opposite of veracity is lies and deceit. Teachers must boast prestige in matters of integrity and honesty, and act accordingly (Hirsch, A., 2008). These characteristics are aspects related with character and lifestyle. Possessing these values will enable to provide confidence to the users of their services. Teachers should never lie because they provide a public service and generate a public asset. Teachers' public role neither consists only in public deliberations with all those affected by them practicing their profession nor in promoting the public use of reason, but in embodying their ethical convictions in their everyday life to generate a public asset. This is the value of the teacher's example to which so much importance has been attached in education.

Besides, there is a need for good professional teachers to conserve, improve and update professional knowledge. Teachers have to be abreast of the new theories of their teaching specialty, of the new methodologies to facilitate students' learning, of collaboration with colleagues of their profession, of collaboration with families, and of society's demands. In other words, teachers are morally obliged to update their knowledge to improve the technical and human quality of the service they offer.

5. Teaching and training for ethics of care

In ethics of care, the teaching-learning process is understood as a time for human moral encounters. From the ethics of care perspective, teachers are evidently interested in their students academic achievements, but they are even more interested in their students becoming moral people. As a result of this, teachers offer models of personal interaction apart from offering models of intellectual activity, they treat students with consideration and respect, and they encourage students to treat each other similarly.

In order to promote moral development, the use of four procedures is proposed to enhance the ethical ideal during human encounters: modeling, dialog, practice and confirmation (Noddings, 1988). Modeling is the first procedure for moral education. It is the element that enables us to demonstrate what caring means, just as we

would show a child how to approach a pet. For others, the very exercise of the care practice is an example of how care is to be offered and received.

There is the possible risk of there being too much focus on the modeling task and of being districted from the true sense of the care practice. Indeed, Noddings (2002) considered that offering the best modeling is normally possible when one offers care without actually realizing it; that is, when one cares as a way of existing and being in the world. Therefore, Noddings advised that should the caregiver have to reflect on something while practicing care, it should be precisely on the caring relationship: how our care is received, if our response is adequate, if our actions actually help or make things worse. In other words, the purpose of modeling should be people's moral encounter and not merely a demonstration of a particular practice.

The dialog procedure in moral education reveals the phenomenonology of the care practice. That is, the caregiver pays attention or is momentarily engrossed by the person being cared for who, in turn, receives and pays attention to the caregiver's efforts. In this sense, dialog needs a relationship of confidence and understanding as a prerequisite (Noddings, 2003b). This dialog takes place among moral agents who invite their own understanding and that of others; this is what is known as interpersonal understanding.

Schools must not ignore matters which are in the hearts of human beings. Students need to become involved in open dialog about all that which may be of interest to them or may concern them, even though they may be controversial subjects. Some teachers are reluctant about this kind of proposals because they consider there is a foreseeable risk of indoctrination or of certain specific values being imposed. They think that those matters related with values must be treated in a private setting (in the family or at church) rather than in a school which is a public space. Nonetheless in ethics of care, educational centers are considered the ideal places to critically examine values, beliefs and opinions with thought and esteem.

The practice component is essential because capacity for interpersonal attention has to be practiced for it to be learnt. In order to develop the capacity to care and the receptivity to others' needs, we have to take up activities which offer others care and attention (Noddings, 2002). The purposes of the practice component are none other than the improvement of both the ethical ideal and the sense of the bond which exists among people, and renovated commitment with receptivity. Therefore, the care practice is learnt by participating in activities that assist others.

Students may also participate in service activities at teaching centers in such a way that maintaining and creating pleasant environments would be a shared effort with the civil community. The purpose of such experiences is two-fold: the care practice itself and acquiring professional competences at the same time. Besides, it is good to invite students to help one another and to work side by side; it is not a matter of

them improving merely in the academic sense, but of them also acquiring competences related to the care practice. The use of small groups competing with each other is recommended as a form of cooperative learning. Moreover, students are invited to become involved in community service as a form of educational experience, a service which schools provide details of (Puig, Batlle, Bosch and Palos, 2008).

The confirmation component starts from the premise that the image which people receive of themselves is capable of either improving and fostering or destroying the ethical ideal. It is a question of responding in the face of acts that are barely ethical, or not ethical at all, in such a way that students receive a better image of themselves. It is a matter of attributing the best possible motivation to their behavior in accordance with their own reality so that the act in question is not considered a complete reflection of the person who actually performed it (Noddings, 2002).

Conclusions

For the aforementioned educational procedures to be efficient, interpersonal relationships are required that are close enough to be well aware of the reality, motivations and interests of those to whom we want to confirm. Time is also required for these trust-based relationships to come into being. The important point in ethical teaching is that, firstly, students must have a feeling of personal security, they should concentrate on their talents and must feel confident about them so they will go to class with interesting questions they wish to ask about life and the profession they wish to practice. It is with such material that the teaching syllabus should be put together. This is the most profound source from which interest for learning sprouts.

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[1] This concept has developed widely by Barber (2000), and refers to arguments given in public to achieve what is meant by the common good for community.