Educational Psychology: Psyc 218

Global Psych Assignment

In 1998, in the New York Public School system a young, white teacher read a story to her elementary school class of black and Hispanic students. The story was about a little black girl from Haiti, named Brenda. The children loved the story and asked for copies to bring home to show their parents and the teacher gave them copies. The book was called “Nappy Hair”. Some parents became very upset and this was a major controversy in educational circles for a while.

Students should answer the following questions:

1. Why were some parents upset?
2. Do you believe the teacher should have been fired?
3. Would you read or assign a story about an ethic group different than yours to your class? The same as yours?
4. What psychological trait might this teacher have been lacking?

Note to Faculty:

This is a real case. The student should mention that the use of the term “Nappy Hair” could be considered insulting or disrespectful, especially as used by a white person. The teacher however did not do anything illegal. Teachers need empathy and sensitivity in dealing with situations involving diverse cultures.