Instituting a Sound Classroom Management System: Building a Positive Classroom Climate

Please read the following scenario:

Sheila is making wisecracks and funny comments while her teacher is leading a lesson in the front of the classroom. Her comments grow louder as the students around her start to giggle. Sheila’s teacher notices that she is making inappropriate comments that are distracting the other students from the lesson.

The teacher wants to make sure that he communicates respect for Sheila even while he addresses her challenging behavior. Based on what you have learned in this lesson, what could the teacher say or do to communicate respect while addressing Sheila’s inappropriate comments? Consider the following options, and then decide what you think the teacher should do in this situation:

1. Use an “I-message” to keep the focus on the inappropriate behavior, rather than on Sheila as an individual. Tell Sheila, “When you make inappropriate comments while I am teaching, you distract everyone in the classroom. This means that we must stop the lesson until everyone refocuses their attention on the lesson.”

2. Use non-threatening questions to understand Sheila’s behavior. Avoid asking why she made the inappropriate comments. Instead, ask Sheila what went through her mind when she made the wisecracks.

3. Use another technique to communicate respect while addressing Sheila’s inappropriate behavior.

Describe the behavior:

1. What does the behavior of concern look like when it happens?

2. What should the behavior look like (i.e., what behavior should you teach)?
Describe the conditions around the behavior:

3. When does the behavior take place?

4. What specifically occurs before the behavior takes place?

Consider the options presented for the above scenario:

5. Which of the options (above) would you choose to use to address the challenging behavior? What is your reasoning for choosing this option over the other options?

6. Would you apply this strategy before, during, or after the challenging behavior occurs? What is your reasoning for this?

7. Imagine that you need to tell another paraprofessional how s/he should respond to the challenging behavior described in the scenario. Describe in detail, step by step, how this paraprofessional should carry out the strategy that you chose to use.