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Exploration of Co-Teaching in Inclusive Fourth-Grade Classrooms as a Viable Option for School Districts

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EXPLORATION OF CO-TEACHING IN INCLUSIVE FOURTH-GRADE CLASSROOMS
AS A VIABLE OPTION FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Many schools nationwide are restructuring their classrooms to fully include students with special educational needs (SEN). Co-teaching is one service delivery option designed to meet the needs of students with SEN in the inclusive setting. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect, if any, that co-teaching between a general education teacher and a special education teacher for reading instruction has upon student achievement scores when implemented as an instructional intervention to meet the needs of all learners within the inclusive fourthgrade classroom. This study also examined the perceptions of teachers regarding co-teaching and their inclusive classrooms. This study included fourth-grade students with current Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and teachers from a rural northwestern Pennsylvanian school district. The quantitative portion of this study used archived data to measure changes in student academic achievement scores and made comparisons. Quantitative results showed no evidence that co-teaching had a positive effect on student academic achievement scores. The qualitative portion of this study allowed teachers to share their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of co-teaching in the inclusive classroom, as well as their perceptions of the academic and social success of students within such a setting. The qualitative findings indicate that teachers are favorable toward co-teaching as an instructional intervention to meet the needs of all students within the inclusive classroom. Specific concerns are presented that have implications toward the successful implementation of co-teaching within the inclusive classroom.