High Literacy in Odds-beating Middle Schools Implementing the Common Core

Abstract

This multiple case study investigated the nature of educators’ literacy instruction as they attempt to align their instruction to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The study was conducted in New York state where educators were required to align their literacy instruction to the CCSS. Six middle schools where students’ performance was better than predicted based on two years of CCSS assessment data were investigated and compared with three other middle schools with typical CCSS performance. Teacher and administrator interviews and focus groups and documentary data were collected along with classroom observations. The analysis revealed that teachers at odds-beating schools often identify teacher-initiated, comprehension-focused instruction as a focus rather than the student-centered questioning and activities indicative of high literacy.