A Los Angeles project shows that communication skills can be infused successfully into the broader curriculum.
The lessons were divided into six modules: Introduction to Health Science, Personal Health, Nutrition and Food Choices, Behavior and the Use and Misuse of Substances, Growing and Maturing, and Communicable and Chronic Diseases. Each module addressed a health topic as well as the following reading/language skills: word meanings, complete sentences, paragraphs, sequence, main topic, topic sentences, drawing conclusions, cause and effect, and fact and opinion.

After each module was taught, criterion-referenced tests measured the health content growth of the students, and teachers' lesson plans were rated on the Quality of Instructional Planning Scale.

Pupils were administered the Basic Skills Inventory, a Rasch-scaled assessment instrument, at the beginning and end of the project. The post-test revealed some exciting results. First, project students' growth in reading and language was statistically significant when compared with that of non-project students. Second, the number of project students who initially scored at the first quartile in reading and language was significantly reduced in the post-test. Almost half of all the students (project and non-project) had scored in the first quartile on the pretest. On the post-test, 49 percent of the non-project students were still at that level, but only 16 percent of the project students were.

By infusing reading and language into the health curriculum, project teachers gave their students additional reading instruction without sacrificing time or curriculum content. We view this growth as a breakthrough as we seek to improve the basic communication skills of all students.

Reference
