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### **A longitudinal study on the development of listening skills**

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A cohort of 1021 children was studied between 2002 and 2006 to identify their development in listening competency during the primary cycle of schooling. Seven aspects of listening (namely Listening alone, Listening in a group, Listening comprehensively, Listening thoughtfully, Listening for appreciation, Listening for learning, Listening politely) delineated by the National Education Commission under "Literacy Competency", were used as fields of study. Data collection instruments were developed across the five year period and measured the nature of development of competency in listening. Data collection instruments were developed using examples from the environment of the child and considering the developmental stage of the child. The curriculum materials were studied to check the content validity of the instruments. The number of words in the question or activity too was decided based on the developmental stage of the child. Data were collected by class teachers who were guided for the purpose. A researcher was appointed to guide the teachers. Percentages were calculated to identify developmental patterns of competency. According to the findings, the percentage of children who responded after listening alone was lower than the percentage of children who responded in a group. More students achieved the competency in listening in groups than the other competencies in listening. Grade wise analysis of data showed that responding after listening was highest in Grade 2. Listening for appreciation and listening for learning show the highest levels compared to the other fields in Grade 2. Grade 5 showed the lowest percentage (other than the field of listening in groups) in listening competency. The fluctuation pattern in grades, specially the decreasing trend towards key stages 2 and 3 should be studied further to understand underlying factors for the situation. Further in the preparation of the curriculum with regard to listening in primary grades, the pattern needs to be studied to change the focus on different aspects of listening. As an example the decreasing trend in listening at grade 4 (65%) within a group when compared with other grades can be studied in depth to identify remedial measures.

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