

**Fabian, H. (2001) Pupil mobility: stories of turbulence. Paper presented on the 11th European Conference on Quality in Early Childhood Education (EECERA), Holland**

**Abstract**

Transitions occur as children move from home to nursery and then into school. Children also move from one class to another and transfer between phases of education. These “frequent transitions of childhood provide strategic points of analysis since during them past, present and future are symbolically represented” (James and Prout 1997, p.234).

However, there are a growing number of transfers between schools. Some pupils move between the state and private sectors, and between countries. In the past twenty years, around 1.5 million children have moved in and out of the UK. High pupil turnover is associated with the armed forces, refugees, travellers, occupational travellers, moving house for employment reasons, family breakdown, and temporary accommodation. Further turbulence often follows exclusions. In addition poor attendance results in interrupted learning. These factors can be grouped into four broad categories that comprise international migration, internal migration, institutional movement and individual movement (Dobson, 2000).

Pupils do not necessarily leave or join a class at the end of a year, nor at the end of a term. They are just as likely to leave or join at the end of a week or part way through a year, and often arrive unannounced (Jordan, 2000). As they move from one school to another pupils gain experience but the more changes of school made, the more opportunities there are for ‘dropping out’. There are also more schools responsible for pupils’ success or failure. This mobility results in enormous pressures on schools and individual pupils and has knock-on effects.

This paper looks from the perspective of some of these children and tells their stories.