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[See table of contents](#)

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Hamm, L. (2021).
*Turbulence: Leaders, Educators, and Students Responding to
Rapid Change*
Rowman & Littlefield London Press. 105 pages
ISBN:9781475849097

Reviewed by: Rachael Kalaba, University of Toronto

Turbulence: Leaders, Educators, and Students Responding to Rapid Change (Hamm, 2021) was written during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time when uncertainty became the norm and impacted many facets of life, including schooling. What makes the book unique is that it was written amid a period of chaos, isolation, and loneliness. Hamm filtered through the resulting complexity by focusing on the need for new theories to foster improved learning, skills building and retention, and critical thinking.

Hamm's book exposes how teachers and school administrators have little control or input in what is being taught while pointing out that they can influence how the curriculum is taught. The analysis shows how governments in North America continue to influence curriculum change, leaving educators and administrators to concentrate more on the how and not the what. COVID-19 has pushed education and schooling to change, evolving as a process of adaptation and, in most instances, survival.

We saw that during the COVID-19 pandemic, from 2020 up to the beginning of 2022, the roles of educators and school leaders revolved around supporting students to manage the turbulence and to continue influencing students' well-being as much as the learning outcomes. The book has six chapters giving different scenarios on leadership in the Canadian and international context; All six chapters were reviewed to give a distinct overview of what leadership in turbulent times looked like and to provide alternative approaches moving forward for school leaders. The six chapters have stories of how students, school leaders, and community members communicated, led, learned, and showed resilience. Hamm cites Paulo Freire (1970), suggesting that storytelling is a dialogue of learning experiences, and people who share stories become bonded and sealed through a reciprocal process (p. 17).

Chapter 1 focuses on building peace in a complex, turbulent, and diverse world. Hamm engages readers on the need to challenge not just school leaders but educators, students in schools, and the communities they serve. In this chapter, Hamm mentions the heartbreaking moments of learning about an incident in Canada that resulted in the death of 13 people. The perpetrator, disguised as a policeman, lured victims to his car, and these killings happened during the pandemic. In this scenario, Hamm asserts there is no coming back from trauma and turbulence, so he raises the question of the effect of such turbulences. Most of the turbulences the world experienced during the pandemic were economic meltdown, despair, environmental damage, and mass shootings. The critical question he raises is how educators could help their students understand and prepare for these types of turbulences in such troubling times. In reviewing this example, as a black woman in North America, the first thought is how policemen in North America have, in most instances, formed part of black people's trauma.

The killing of George Floyd in the USA is one vivid example of racism and injustice perpetrated by

the police on black people during the pandemic. The reflection for me is another turbulence that emerged during the pandemic: increased anti-Black and anti-Asian racism. How do school leaders support their students facing racism? Lopez (2020) writes about the urgent need for leaders to support Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, who are not thriving and are pushed out of schools due to systematic and other forms of racism; there is a need to explore approaches for supporting BIPOC students. As a writer, I do not dispute that all students need support. However, the emphasis is on approaches targeted explicitly at BIPOC students during these turbulent times, and how they are supported. Through the lens of education, Hamm highlights that our society needs educators and learners who must be humans with caring hearts, courage, and stamina, who know they will forever be on the front lines of combating social ills (p. 5). Irrespective of what is happening in the world, education remains the hope and opportunity for human society.

The chapter outlines how university and K-12 educators across Canada are working professionally and collaboratively to understand the complexities of technology use in their communities, schools, and classrooms (p. 15). In essence, Hamm acknowledges that although education is fraught with challenges and adversity, it still must foster hope, peace, and opportunity for human growth, regardless of the happenings in the world (p. 5). Chapter One challenges school leaders to act on the local and global events that matter to them and take action that will positively impact students' lives and the communities they lead.

Chapter 2 examines the blurry paths of leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Collective leadership versus authoritative leadership as essential aspects of education are explored and the role of leadership development at all levels to ensure sustainability is emphasized. In this chapter, Hamm stresses the centrality of leadership and how individuals working in public school education respond to rapid change. Hamm notes that 2020 almost handcuffed leaders, teachers, and students and their families who relied on equitable education systems.

My question is, has education ever been equitable? Or did COVID-19 show the global cracks in our education systems? We saw how most educational leaders in countries like Uganda closed schools for 22 months, resulting in students losing two full years of learning opportunities. According to Nagawa et al. (2022), Uganda had no alternative but to have prolonged school closures. Within the Canadian school system, we observed that many children from low-income families struggled with access. The author tells a story of Gordo, which is thought-provoking and gives an exemplary scenario of what leadership is all about and can be blurry in different forms. Hamm suggests that recruiters need to be on the lookout to allow blurry collective leadership (p. 29).

This chapter emphasizes the need for collective leadership moving forward, suggesting that school leaders must welcome all forms of leadership in communities they serve, especially from newer and longer-standing immigrant minority communities that are often ignored due to the dominance of the Eurocentric approaches. Hamm follows other critical scholars, such as George Dei, Njoki Wane, and Ann Lopez, who also emphasized the need to re-visit school leadership education in Canada that is heavily influenced by Eurocentric approaches (Dei & Adhami, 2021).

Leadership in schools is about how school leaders use their power to guide the thinking of others in the school toward improved student outcomes. Hamm shares the thought that the complexity of leading a school requires an administrative team, and the need for leadership development means it must take place at every level of the school if there is to be leadership sustainability. Hamm conveys an urgency to choose collective, authentic, ethical, and inclusive leadership as a sustainable approach in the long term post-2020. I note that collective leadership requires a concerted effort from school administrators for this approach to work. As much as a collective approach is needed, success or failure in current systems still depends heavily on the formal school leader. If the collaborative approach is to work, it requires buy-in from the community and political leadership such that school leaders are supported and empowered to carry out their work effectively.

Chapter 3 explores digital darkness, communication, and related challenges faced by school leaders from late 1999 to early 2020. Chapter three analyzes how the digital world has evolved by providing the history of communication, industrial and technological development, and its impact on school administrators. The definition of violence has also changed, and Hamm reminds us that violence can happen anywhere at any time (p. 48). However, given the ubiquity of cyber-bullying in schools, these and related

issues of violence in schools could have been discussed in greater detail.

Chapter 4 focuses on teachers designing lessons about the environment and social groups (p. 61). Acknowledging environment and social groups and understanding why and how they are different is imperative as we grapple with many fascist and racial attacks on social groups deemed different from us. The story narrated in this chapter highlights positive approaches teachers in the classroom use in dealing with the environment and social groups (p. 63). Chapter four shows the role of teachers in the classroom as leaders and showcases the helplessness and hopefulness experienced during the pandemic. The chapter encourages leadership to be built in students by providing leadership and support and recognizing teachers who positively impact the classrooms.

In Chapter 5 Hamm writes about how strong educators should get to know their students as one way of permeating engaging lessons (p. 73). Chapter Five further talks about the responsibility of leaders, teachers, and students and how there is no shortcut to leading in 2020 and beyond. The author discusses public community and school spaces and when schools should open and close. The future school is envisioned as one that is open to all children and adults. Though this is an excellent idea, it is a debate for another day. In this chapter, global culture is encouraged and the importance of Paulo Freire's reflection on shaping students' confidence, competence, and authentic identity is mentioned (p. 88). Hamm encourages leaders, teachers, and students to intentionally look for leadership on the fringes of their schools (p. 88). Sadly, cyberbullying was at an all-time high in 2020, and anxiety and depression were rampant among educators and school leaders. This indicates that much needs to be done to overcome emerging challenges of mental health for not just students but also teachers and school leaders – and that it should be done collectively. As the author puts it, humans are not communicating in today's age; instead of talking to each other, they are busy on phones, typing, texting, posting, and tagging (p. 77). Hamm stresses that people need to take responsibility for their actions and stop blaming it on technology. In his analysis, he notes, "We can all agree that social media and the internet help people to communicate and connect" (p. 78).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online communication came in handy due to lockdowns and movement restrictions. The chapter recommends that school leaders and educators should always strive to develop the best ways of managing communication gadgets and channels such that they are used effectively and do not cause harm. The chapter encourages schools to allow learners to discuss various issues affecting their well-being and to iron out challenges being faced by learners. The author argues that effective communication can be achieved through collective efforts from the school with the support of family, community, and policy that protects students and curbs aspects of misuse and abuse of technology by students and educators. Hamm argues that there is little chance of relational growth among people without effective communication, which is one of the critical skills moving beyond 2020. Chapter Five calls on teachers, students, and school leaders to go above and beyond to achieve a better and safer world anchored on effective communication. The need for teachers and school leaders to listen to their students as part of effective communication is highlighted. Generally, Hamm is hopeful in this chapter that educational growth has a chance of beginning again.

Chapter 6 is centred on peace. The author highlights how we must establish a standard definition of peace that includes everyone in our communities in our collective leadership approach regardless of their background or physical and/or emotional appearance. I applaud the author for this. We have differences that lead to violence, conflict, chaos, and turbulence, but once we accept each other in our differences, we can learn to live in peace to some degree. We cannot fight our way to peace and victory because fights never end, and there is always a winner and a loser (p. 100); at the end of the day, peace matters not just in schools but the world over. Even if peace cannot be the core of learning, we all need it at the end of the day, and lack of peace may affect other aspects of life, such as health and well-being. As the author states, we must be authors, agents, and thinkers of peace. Hamm brings out the element of restoring nature and our environment and protecting our planet by letting people know and understand why it is crucial. People must stand up to help and support one another and know that being kind costs nothing.

Overall, the book is fascinating and educative. Through storytelling, the author wrote about several aspects of leadership and instabilities and provided accessible and transferable examples for educators and school leaders. Excellent questions that can guide supportive learning are provided. We are all faced with everyday challenges, but that should not deter us from reaching our goals regarding leading or ac-

quiring knowledge. This is a good book that educators can use to gain insights on preparing for turmoil. What I found valuable was the emphasis on prioritizing aspects of learning and education that can add value to our lives and are suitable for educational leaders, teachers, students, and communities. The other components were acknowledging collective leadership, peace and harmony, effective communication, and changing approaches to leading as a way forward in building healthy communities and an all-encompassing school. Additionally, school leaders must consider different aspects of leading, including embracing new and migrant communities' ways of leading that are different but innovative.

Areas that could be improved or added in future work relate to how best to handle diverse social groups in schools and racism and how these can be worked on to improve learning, skills building, and critical thinking to reduce adverse incidences during turbulent times.

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