

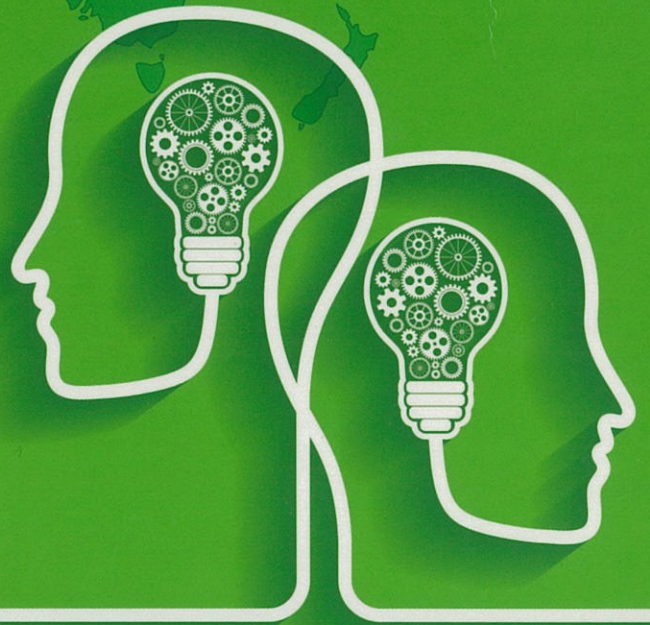
WISE



Heads, **WISE** Hearts

Conversations with
Asia-Pacific school leaders

Pam Ryan



WISE Heads, WISE Hearts

Conversations with Asia-Pacific school leaders

In *Wise Heads, Wise Hearts*, educator Pam Ryan explores a variety of conceptual leadership styles through a range of school and organisational case studies. Taking a personal approach to the business of school leadership, she presents a variety of models and goals for all educators who wish to lead their schools with a wise head and a wise heart into a new future.

In multiple conversations with school leaders throughout Australia, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand, Pam looks at their beliefs and values as 'wise heads', and the ways in which their thoughts and actions impact on the 'hearts' of their school: their students, colleagues and communities.

Through careful examination of the common threads and elements, *Wise Heads, Wise Hearts* conceptualises models of best-practice approaches to school leadership. Through a three-stage analytical framework, Pam outlines the key priorities, attitudes and skills for current and future leaders, drawing from the lived experience and professional accomplishments of her interview subjects.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pam Ryan is an educator and writer with 30 years of leadership experience, in both the public and the private education sectors, working as a teacher, principal and senior director for networks of schools in Australia and Hong Kong. Her interests and expertise lie in sharing and in facilitating development in the areas of strategic planning, curriculum, leadership, professional learning and education policy, with a particular focus on innovative and creative problem solving.

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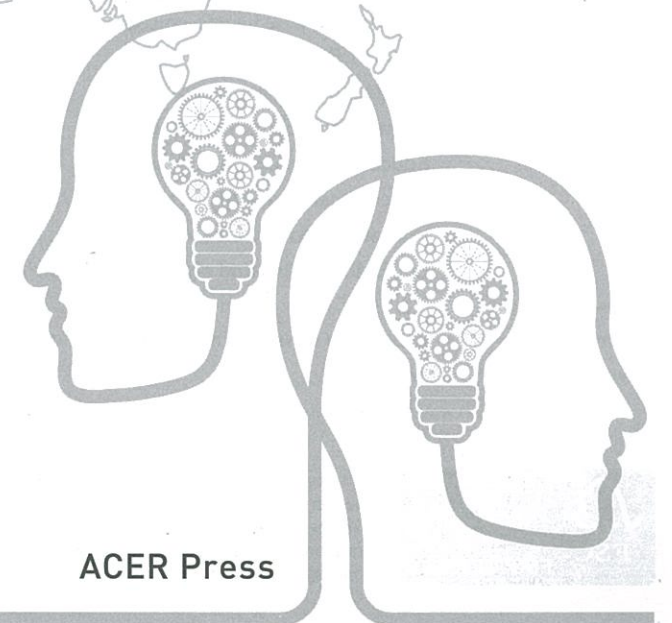
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For Graeme

*Sure of the spring that warms them into birth,
The golden seeds thou trustest to the earth;
And dost thou doubt the eternal spring sublime,
For deeds—the seeds which wisdom sows in time.*

Friedrich von Schiller

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Preface

Wise Heads, Wise Hearts is about the practice of leadership in education, as described by 10 school leaders from across the Asia-Pacific region. The voices are those of effective practitioners, captured as they reflect on their work. They share their practice in a spirit of professional generosity and a belief in collective responsibility.

The title of *Wise Heads, Wise Hearts* is an adaptation of a phrase coined in *Leading Schools in Times of Change* by Day and colleagues (2000) who, in a study of school leaders in the United Kingdom, determined that effective leadership required 'an intelligent head with an intelligent heart'.

Why this book?

The first is a personal reason. After 30 years in education, I spent time reflecting on my knowledge and understandings of leadership, published as *Leadership in Education: Learning from Experience*. After I had articulated my own thinking, I became interested in exploring the perceptions of other experienced leaders. Would we hold similar views or would there be significantly different emphases or approaches?

The second reason was to tap the firsthand experience of current leaders. While it is informative and helpful to read educational theory, it is particularly engaging to hear about leadership in action. I have a belief in the value of not only putting theory into practice but also putting practice into theory. What might we extrapolate from the richness of lived experience and practice? *Wise Heads, Wise Hearts* is an attempt to find out.

The third reason was to provide a resource that could support the professional development of current and aspiring school leaders. The participants in these leadership conversations provide deep and honest insights, and their reflections and advice are a combination of inspiration and practical know-how.

Audience

Whether you are a school leader or aspire to leadership, there is much to be gained by learning from and with colleagues. The main audience for whom *Wise Heads, Wise Hearts* is intended, therefore, is school leaders and aspirants. Those who study or teach about leadership will also find thought-provoking material to share with tertiary students.

While educators often tap into the thinking and literature of the business world, the latter tends not to reciprocate. This is a pity as schools are complex organisations, requiring highly sophisticated leadership and managerial skills. Should they have the inclination to read on, business leaders will have much to learn from their education colleagues.

About the author

Pam Ryan is an educator and writer with 30 years of leadership experience, in both the public and private education sectors, internationally and in Australia. Her interests and expertise lie in sharing and in facilitating development in the areas of strategic planning, curriculum, leadership, professional learning and education policy, with a particular focus on innovative and creative problem solving. *Leadership in Education: Learning from Experience* was Ryan's first book.

From 2010 to 2014, Ryan was director of education for a Hong Kong-based community of 21 schools. Previously, Ryan spent seven years as a school education director for a group of 31 schools in the New South Wales government system, had wider regional responsibility for secondary curriculum and, at state level, project managed the implementation of new legislation for raising the school leaving age.

During her time as an education director, Ryan designed two collaborative 'virtual school' innovations: a shared senior curriculum delivery across five schools in Orange, New South Wales, and a regional selective school provision across 20 secondary schools. Ryan spent 10 years as a secondary school principal in the New South Wales state system. Ryan began her teaching career as a teacher of English and history.

In community life, Ryan served a four-year term as a councillor in local government, including a year as deputy mayor of the New South Wales regional city of Orange.

Acknowledgements

Planning and writing *Wise Heads, Wise Hearts* has been made all the more enjoyable because of its collaborative nature. The project participants—Brenda Cook, James Dalziel, Sally Holloway, Wei Luo, James MacDonald, Brendan Maher, Lila Mularczyk, Malcolm Pritchard, Tarek Razik and Dennis Yarrington—were generous in giving their time and sharing their practice. *Wise Heads, Wise Hearts* is a tribute to their leadership.

My particular thanks to my good colleagues whose help was invaluable and ranged from conceiving ideas, connecting with leader participants and even acting as interpreters when needed: Chris Durbin, David Fitzgerald, Graham Ranger, Vania Tiatto and Xiaoping Wang.

I have appreciated the expert and patient editing of Susan Keogh, and thank Patrick O’Duffy of ACER Press for showing confidence in the work.

The spirit of my late husband Graeme McGuinness continues to guide my hand and my gratitude goes to our daughter Ann, whose love and support sustain me.



PART I

Talking about leadership