

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

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The word “editorial” has two senses, one of them being commonly used as the title of writing by journal or newspaper editors expressing their personal views on some matter, such as this page, our introduction to a collection of articles offered to and in honour of David Pimm. Editorials can do many things—provoke, cajole, plead, interrogate, inform—but should not take away from the content of the issue in which they appear. We have elected not to summarise the contributions to this collection. We would like, instead, to provide some context for the origins and nature of the monograph.

“Editorial” is also an adjective that indicates matters relating to or concerning the work of editors, which turns out to be equally relevant to our short introduction, not least because editing writing of all kinds (books, journals, theses, chapters, articles) has been part of David’s lifelong contribution to the field of mathematics education. Moreover, one of the distinctive features of David’s career has been the overlap between some of his research interests (notably relating to language and linguistics in the learning and teaching of mathematics) and his professional activities as an Editor. At doctoral defences or viva voce exams, seminars or conferences, David always has something to say about the use of pronouns or the choice of verb tense that nobody else noticed (despite having spent decades pointing out such things). Editorially speaking, we greatly appreciate this coincidence of interests, which is reflected in the organisation of the rest of our remarks.

Who is he? Many readers will know that David Pimm began contributing to *For the Learning of Mathematics* in its inaugural year (1980–1981) and has continued to this day with a total of 30 texts, long and short. For six years, David was also editor of the journal (1997–2003), and he has continued to make less visible contributions, as a reader or reviewer, to almost every issue. Although he is perhaps best known for his work on language, this monograph, as well as his various contributions to FLM, speak to the fecundity and diversity of his work across mathematical domains (number, geometry, algebra) and age ranges (toddlers, K–12 learners, university students, teachers) and disciplinary connections (poetry, art, literature, psychoanalysis, history, aesthetics, linguistics) and forms of text (afterwords, prefaces, interludes, editorials, book reviews, memorials, abstracts, papers, short communications, poems).

While his work on language is seminal, and continues today, there is no “David Pimm” brand that describes a tight programme of research or a grand narrative theory that seeks adherents or followers or a school of thought. “David Pimm” is eclectic, featuring a variety of notions and tools that are custom-made for the circumstances, and frequently the result of opportunistic encounters with colleagues and students. No topic is too narrow. Never will you find advo-

cacy-filled language about what *should* be done or felt or known. Read “David Pimm” (what is the relationship between the author and the text?) or read this monograph to see a familiar phenomenon with fresh eyes (or ears), or to examine that which typically goes unnoticed.

Who are we? Over the past few years, we, the editors of this monograph, had several conversations about recognising David’s contribution to the field and to the community of mathematics education. In 2019, we were ready and issued invitations to scholars who had worked or studied with David or had a particular appreciation of his work. The invitation was to participate in a *Festschrift* event in Vancouver, British Columbia (where David lives).

We, the participants and contributors, gathered for the *Festschrift* event at the beginning of March 2020. For all of us, it was the last event before the global pandemic stopped our interesting conferencing habits (Laurinda Brown only just got back to the UK). Little did we know how strange it would seem, in the future, to have been sitting so close to each other as we each spoke about our scholarly ties to David, to have been reading not just masked eye expressions, but smiles and grimaces, too. Looking back, the event seems so precious, and the writing it helped to incubate retains a trace of the kinship fostered by fooding and festing together.

Who are you? If you have been a student of David, you will know how much he cares about words; how willing he is to read (and re-read and re-re-read) what you have written; how many commas you have moved from one place to another. If you have participated in collections involving David, you will not be surprised to know that he could not help wanting to read the articles in this monograph, and respond with some words of his own, eager as always to make connections. Despite having seen so much before, he never lets on, and instead moves things forward by creating new connections, matching old themes with new points of view, tirelessly pointing to how that pronoun really matters! If you are new to mathematics education research, or new to David Pimm, this monograph offers a sense of the different strands that are woven through his thinking, his voice ventriloquated throughout the collection. If you are an old hand, meanwhile, it may remind you of the richness of his work and, as several contributors illustrate, how prescient he has often been, with many issues of current interest clearly foreshadowed and, in many cases, discussed in some depth more than 30 years ago. If like us, you are an editor, you may appreciate the well-wrought writing (and note the odd comma that you might have placed differently). And finally, to you, David, thank you, and we hope you enjoy the read.