

In the Purposeful Algebraic Activity project we designed a sequence of spreadsheet-based pedagogic tasks for the introduction of algebra in the early years of secondary schooling. This design combines two relatively novel features. First, the tasks are purposeful for pupils and contain opportunities to appreciate the utility of algebraic ideas. Secondly, affordances of the spreadsheet are carefully matched to the algebraic ideas which are being introduced. Examples from the tasks will be used to illustrate the design process. Data from the teaching programme using these tasks will be presented to highlight connections between aspects of the task design and the construction of meanings for variable.