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**En route from patterns to algebra: Comments and reflections.**

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Summary: This article is a commentary on the papers in this issue of ZDM on Understanding Generalization in K-12 Algebra. It tries to interpret and understand at least some of the reported phenomena within a constructivist framework. The latter locates meaning not in the external representations but in the individual's activity on and with them. This activity on the other hand is strongly regulated (but not determined) by social contracts and belief systems. From that, and considerations of the more general mathematical context, various suggestions for further and extended research can be drawn. One special aspect is that generalization processes will have to be complemented by some kind of instruction on the conventional algebraic symbolism and its usage.

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*Keywords:* algebraic thinking; generalization; generalizing patterns; elementary algebra; constructivism  
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