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**Centre 2 – Manipulatives |  
as Thinking Tools**

**Activity A - Exploring Algebra Tiles**

1. Sort and classify the shapes in the baggie. You can use the tray to line them up and arrange them.
2. What do you notice about the shapes? Describe them.
3. These manipulatives are called algebra tiles. How might they be used to help you understand an algebra problem?
4. Write about the algebra tiles in your math notebook.

**Activity B – Balance Scales**

A 2-pan balance scale is a great way to visualize an algebraic equation. Experiment by putting a number of small cubes and bigger cubes on each side of the balance.

How might your represent this with numbers and/or variables? Write some equations in your notebook.

**Activity C – Virtual Manipulatives**

*AFTER you have completed* ***both*** *activities A and B,* you may google “Virtual Manipulatives”. Once you find the NCTM Library online, search for algebra tiles. There are several activities with the tiles, and also an activity with the balance. Try out a few!

How is working with virtual manipulatives online the same as or different from using the ones on the counter?

