

Better Mathematics Through Literacy
Spring Quarter Follow-up Session
Measurement Station III – Modeling Means with Snap Cubes

Materials Needed:

- One set of Snap Cubes per group
- Paper and Pencils

Part I: With the snap cubes, form four separate towers of cubes in the following way: one tower of three cubes, one tower of seven cubes, one tower of five cubes, and one tower of a single cube.

Use the space below to draw a representation of your four cube towers (label your picture).

Now, discuss with the members of your group, how the Snap Cubes would need to be re-arranged so that each one of the towers would have the same amount of Snap Cubes. Use the physical models you have to demonstrate how this re-arrangement of cubes would happen.

Use the space below to draw a representation of your four re-arranged cube towers.

Part II: With the members of your group, talk about how to find the average (mean) of a set of numbers. Use the standard process you just discussed to find the average for the following set of numbers {3, 7, 5, and 1}

What is the average (mean) of these numbers?

How does this calculation relate to your arrangements of Snap Cube towers? How does this activity complement the understanding of a mean?

Part III: Repeat the activity with each person forming a Snap Cube tower to represent the letters in your first name (one letter equals one Snap Cube). Use the re-arrangement method to find the average number of letters in the first name of your group members. Confirm your tower arrangements with the process for finding averages. What would happen if the average (mean) number of letters is a decimal?