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## Viewpoint

## A comment on Baker and Benn 2001: 'Assigning pupils to tutor groups in a comprehensive school'

Baker and Benn's paper<sup>1</sup> describes an interesting practical application of an allocation heuristic. They are wrong, however, when they state that this problem has not attracted the attention of researchers, as there are several papers dealing with such situations.

Mingers and O'Brien<sup>2,3</sup> addressed an almost identical problem in assigning university students to work groups in an equitable way—they termed this the 'equitable partitioning problem'. The only difference is that Baker and Benn have the additional constraint of respecting prior friendship groups. We will incorporate this in our own algorithm and report on comparative results in the future.

Other research in this area includes Beheshtian-Ardekani and Mahmood,<sup>4</sup> Miyaji *et al*,<sup>5</sup> Muller,<sup>6</sup> Donohue and Fox,<sup>7</sup> Weitz and Lakshminarayanan.<sup>8,9</sup>

## References

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## **Response to Mingers and O'Brien**

Our thanks go to J Mingers and F O'Brien for drawing attention to their work. It is pleasing to see that the report of our case study will be influencing future development of their algorithm.

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