

New Features in *Options* 2024

New features on the AutoCreate Screen



At a Glance

At the right-hand side of the AutoCreate Screen there is now a list of attributes, so that you can see at a glance how well AutoCreate is producing a Pattern for you:

You are also warned if the Choices that have been entered mean that it is impossible to get 100% student satisfaction.

For example, you might see:

Warning: Student satisfaction limited to 72% due to missing choices.

Fix a solution



If a particular solution catches your eye, you can now review it more closely, while AutoCreate continues to work.

To do this, click **Fix** in the header of the solution you wish to Fix, and that solution is preserved / protected as long as you wish.

Previously, and now by default, if **Options** finds a new solution that has a better satisfaction than an existing one, it replaces the least-good current solution with the new one.

However this can be inconvenient if you especially wanted to save / work on the one that has been replaced (*for example*, sometimes you may know that a particular solution fits your school better, even if it has a lower satisfaction ... and you can later use 'Improve' to improve it, or otherwise work on it).

So you can now **Fix** a solution: click on the Fix button and that solution is not over-written / replaced, even if it is the lowest satisfaction solution and a better one is found; instead the 'second-worst' solution is over-written.

In addition, if the solution is only partly visible, scrollbars appear, so you can scroll around in the pattern to learn more about it.

The speed of AutoCreate has also been improved, while the algorithms continue to be thorough, to find solutions that might otherwise be missed.

Recent Patterns are now shown explicitly at the bottom of the opening screen of **Options**, to remind you:

To view one, just click on it.

Recently viewed Patterns:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Solution 45 9/11/23 95.0% | Solution 57 12/11/23 95.9% |
|-------------------------------------|---|

Using Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive, GoogleDrive, etc.

An increasing number of schools are using Dropbox etc to store their **Options** (and **TimeTabler**) data, The program now detects if your data appears to be on one of these platforms, and if it is, it presents you with this warning on the opening screen:

Note: you appear to be using Dropbox - this requires special handling so please click to see our article

Clicking on the message opens the relevant KnowledgeBase article in your browser.

At a Glance

Settings

Auto-Create a Pattern

Students: 366
Subjects: 49
Choices: 5
Blocks: 5
Assign: Fast

In Progress

Analysis 2
Refining 5
97.5%

Best Satisfied

Students
98.3%
360 of 366
6 missing

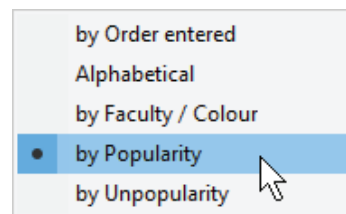
Choices
99.6%
1824 of 1830
6 missing

continued...

Subjects Screen : Sort

There are now two extra Sort options: 'By Popularity' and 'By Unpopularity':

This is only meaningful once you have entered (or imported) your students' choices, but it then shows the most popular (or least popular) subject at the top.



Clash Table Screen

Similar to the screen above, you can now Sort by 'Popularity' and by 'Unpopularity'.

And you can now choose to see the percentage of your students (to nearest percent) choosing each subject: just choose 'Show as: Percent' rather than 'Show as: Number'.



The 'Comments' column now uses colour to highlight less popular subjects, as follows:

| Students choosing this subject | Colour coding |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| 0 | Maroon text |
| 1 up to (min. group size minus 1) | Purple text |

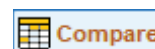
And Subjects with an 'average group size' below 10 are now highlighted in green.

These features may help if your school is under staffing pressures.

Miscellaneous

including features added late into *Options 2023*, taken from requests to the WishList.

Pattern Compare : if you use the Compare button on the Design a Pattern (Library) Screen, it now shows you how many groups there are (in total) in each pattern.



Choice order : if you have ticked 'Pattern Design' (on top Menu) ⇨ 'Give priority to first choice' then this now gives even more bias toward the first choice (then the second, etc) for each student.

Review & Counsel Screen (Student Inspector) : you can now remove all of the Choices for the student you are inspecting, so you can more easily re-assign them yourself manually, during counselling. To do this, click 'Remove' (towards top-left of the screen).

Export : exports to the SchoolBase MIS and to FACTS (previously known as PC School) have now been added (as well as the usual imports).

Move student (on the Students & Choices Screen): you can now move multiple students all together.

TOOLS has also been updated, in minor ways. With many other minor enhancements to *Options*.

Other news

- The free **Gold-Start** Support for New purchasers continues, and in addition Users in existing schools can purchase this enhanced support, or **Gold-Start PLUS**.
Details at: www.timetabler.com/gold-start and on the Upgrade Order Form.
- The HelpScreens have been updated.
- Free Timetabling & Options booklets are available at: www.timetabler.com/timetabling-ebooks/
- If you have your own ideas for the WishList, please send them to us.