



Unisex Toilets Debate Kit Evaluation Report

Debate Kits distributed February–June 2019
Evaluated October 2019

- **We estimate that at least 266 Debate Kits have been used by teachers.**
- **48% of teachers who told us they haven't used the Kit report that they intend to use it in the future.** Around 10% said they had passed the Kit on to a colleague to use.
- **Feedback from teachers who have used the Kit is positive.** Teachers report that the Kit has encouraged debate, helped to promote gender inclusivity, enabled open and honest discussions around trans issues, and "helps to structure discussion and broaden the different points of view being looked at beyond those of the loudest/most confident students".
- **80% of teachers responding to the feedback survey, reported that they intend to use the Debate Kit again.**

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Introduction and summary

The Unisex Toilets Debate Kit was funded by the Royal Institution and Lloyd's Register Foundation. It was produced alongside the CHRISTMAS LECTURES Zone (identity.imascientist.org.uk), in partnership with the 2018 RI CHRISTMAS LECTURES series: *Who am I?*



The Royal Institution
Science Lives Here



Lloyd's Register
Foundation

The Unisex Toilets Debate Kit asks the question: *Should schools make all their toilets unisex?* Covering relevant topics such as biological sex, gender and societal expectations, the Debate Kit helps students explore what gender means to them and others. The Kit includes eight characters with different viewpoints to encourage a balanced discussion around the question. It provides teachers with a resource to get their students discussing the associated personal, social and economic issues and to help them appreciate the power and limitations of science. The structure shows students how to build a discussion and back up their opinions with facts.

All the facts in the Kit were researched and teachers were provided with a list of references and additional resources relating to the Kit:

debate.imascientist.org.uk/unisex-toilets-resources.

Additionally, the Debate Kit included a presentation to help teach during the debate, as well as an online survey to measure how each class' views changed during the debate. It is an online survey which teachers fill in at three different stages during the activity.

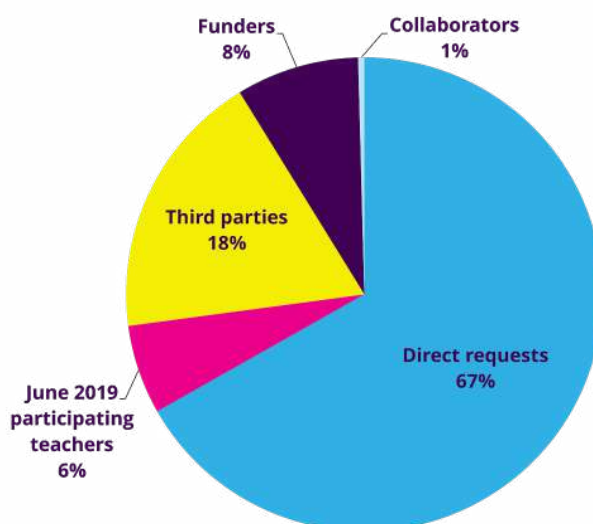
Feedback data in this report looks at survey responses collected between February and October 2019.

Distribution

1,500 Debate Kits were printed in February 2019, and 1,198 copies were distributed between February and June 2019.

Following feedback and discussions with teachers, amendments were made to the Kit in June 2019, and the decision was taken to cease distribution of hard copies.¹

Distribution routes were as follows:



- 800 Kits were distributed to teachers in the UK and Ireland following direct requests.
- 73 Kits included in teacher packs and sent to teachers participating in I'm a Scientist and I'm an Engineer in June 2019.
- 220 Kits distributed to third parties (including STEM Hubs, and science centres).
- 100 Kits were sent to funders.
- 5 Kits were sent to a collaborator.
- *302 Kits remain undistributed, including office file copies.*

73% of Kits were distributed directly to teachers for use in schools. A further 26% were sent to funders and third parties for further distribution.

Additionally, digital versions of the Debate Kit are available to download free-of-charge from the Debate Kit website.²

Following the amendments in June 2019, the digital version of the Kit was updated, and continues to be available to download.

At time of writing, the Debate Kit has been downloaded from our own site 195 times.³

¹ See also: *Distribution; Changes to the Kit and pull from circulation*

² debate.imascientist.org.uk/the-kits/#toilets

³ Site downloads of all versions of Unisex Toilets Debate Kit between 1 January and 1 October 2019.

Changes to the Kit and pull from circulation

In April 2019 the Kit was featured in an article in *i News*.⁴ Following the publication of this article, a number of users on Twitter responded to the @imascientist account with their thoughts on the Kit's contents.

Concerns raised included the statistics given on intersex births, and confusion between sex and gender and scientific terms.

After listening to these concerns and following a discussion with one user — a teacher — the decision was taken that the Robin Koh character card would be modified, and additional resources were added to the website to more accurately represent the facts. Teachers were emailed to explain the change.

It was decided in June 2019 that the remaining hard copies of the Debate Kit would not be sent to teachers. The option to request a copy was removed from the website and no further promotion took place. This was decided to prevent the original Robin Koh card being used in future.

From June 2019 the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit has been available only as a digital version, which can be downloaded from the Debate Kit website.

Press and publicity

School pupils are being challenged to debate trans and gender issues – and whether unisex toilets are a good thing, *i News*, 12 April 2019:

[inews.co.uk/news/education/royal-institution-school-debate-packs-gender-trans-unisex-toilets/](https://www.inews.co.uk/news/education/royal-institution-school-debate-packs-gender-trans-unisex-toilets/)

⁴ See also: *Press and publicity*

Usage

How many Kits were used?

Follow up emails and usage reminders

Regular follow up emails were sent to act as reminders for teachers to use the Debate Kit. Initial emails were sent one, and two weeks following the Kit being posted, to check that the teacher had received the Debate Kit. Where teachers told us they had not received the Kit, we offered to re-send the kit.

Teachers who confirmed they had received the Debate Kit were then sent emails 6, 10, 20, and 36 weeks later asking if they had used the Debate Kit, containing a friendly reminder to do so if they hadn't already. If teachers told us they had used the Kit, they were not sent additional emails. After responding to say whether or not they had used the Kit, teachers were invited to fill in a feedback survey.⁵

Responses show that 2 months after being sent the Debate Kit, 31% (51/166) of respondents had made use of it; after 3 months this figure increased to 40% (68/168), and to 48% (77/162) of respondents after around 6 months.⁶

These numbers are difficult to evaluate with response rates varying for each email (from 22% to 35%). For a more accurate estimation of the number of Debate Kits used, a randomised sample of teachers was used.

The main purpose of these follow up emails was not in establishing kit usage, but to serve as a reminder for teachers to use their Kits, and to direct teachers who had used the Kits to a feedback survey.

Randomised sampling group

Total estimated usage of the Debate Kit was established using a random sample of 100 teachers who were sent the Kit in the initial distribution in February of 2019. This sample was checked against teachers who had already told us they had used the Debate Kit — 8 had — and the remaining teachers were sent an email asking whether they had used the Kit. Non-responders were followed up with reminder emails.

At time of writing, 45 of the randomised sample of 100 teachers⁷ have responded to let us know whether they have used the Debate Kit: 12 (27%) said they had used it.

⁵ See also: *Usage; Reasons for not using Kits and How Kits were used*

⁶ Teachers were not sent additional emails once they told us they had used the Kit. Respondent numbers here show respondents to each email, in addition to those who told us they used the Kit in a previous email.

⁷ Including the 11 teachers who had already confirmed that they had used the Debate Kit.

By extrapolating this figure to the 800 teachers to whom the Debate Kits were directly distributed, we estimate that 213 of the Debate Kits distributed to teachers have been used with their classes.

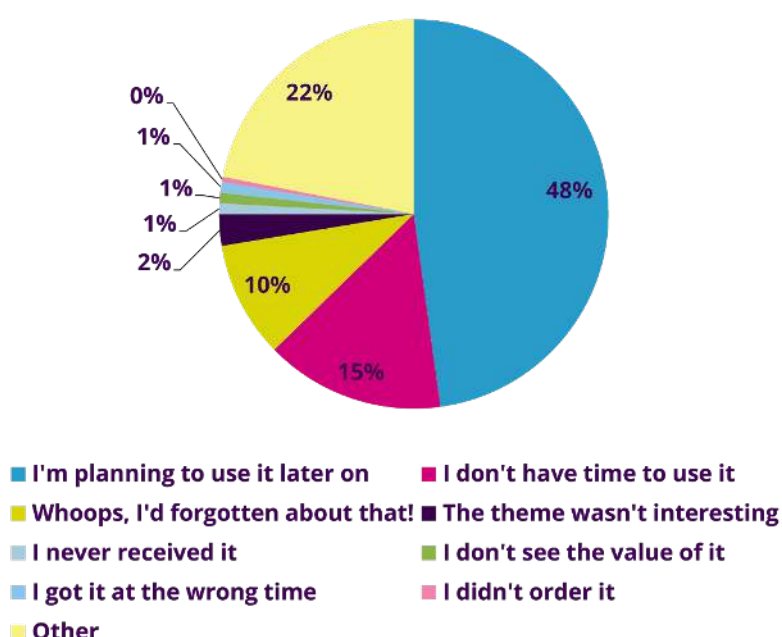
If we estimate that 13% of the 398 Kits sent out through other routes were used — half of the usage of the directly distributed kits — we find a figure of 53 of these Debate Kits being used.

Through this broad approximation then, we have an estimate of at least 266 Debate Kits distributed having been used with students.

Reasons for not using Kits

Teachers who responded to either the regular follow up emails, or within the randomised sample⁸ to say they had not yet used the Kit were invited to answer a feedback survey giving a reason.

Please let us know the main reason you've not used the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit (n=228)⁹

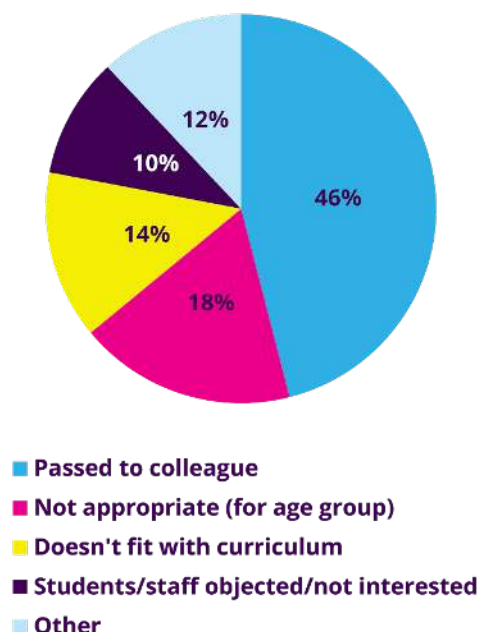


The most common answer (48% of respondents) was that they were intending to use the Kit later on, while 15% reported that they do not have time to use it.

⁸ See also: *Usage; How many Kits were used?*

⁹ Responses received between 24 April and 9 October 2019.

**Please let us know the main reason you've not used the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit:
Other reason, please let us know (n=50, 22% of total respondents)**



Respondents who had selected “other reason” were asked for details. 60% of these teachers (13% of total respondents) reported that they had passed the Kit onto a colleague — almost always in PSHE — or that they felt the Kit did not fit into their curriculum. 18% of these teachers (4% of total respondents) reported that they felt the Kit was not appropriate for their students, commonly KS2.

Three teachers reported not having used the Kit due to concerns raised — either by themselves, or their students — about the content of the Kit:

“I’m unsure of the messages around trans pupils if you were a trans pupil how would it make you feel if everyone in your class was debating your right to use a toilet?” —
Teacher, feedback survey

“The Debating Chair is LGBT and did not want to raise this” —
Teacher, feedback survey

“Our student leader objects as she is LGBT” —
Teacher, feedback survey

Likewise, email feedback from one teacher suggested that pastoral staff had decided the Kit was not appropriate:

“We are a very small school so have unisex facilities. We also have a trans girl who transitioned whilst being at the school. I passed the pack to our head of pastoral care who thought that it was not really appropriate for our school as a whole but has kept hold of it for possible use in small groups with parents and individual students who struggle adapting to our ethos.” —
Teacher, email feedback

Another teacher who reported not having used the Kit as yet, raised a concern that some of their students may not be mature enough to take part in this particular debate:

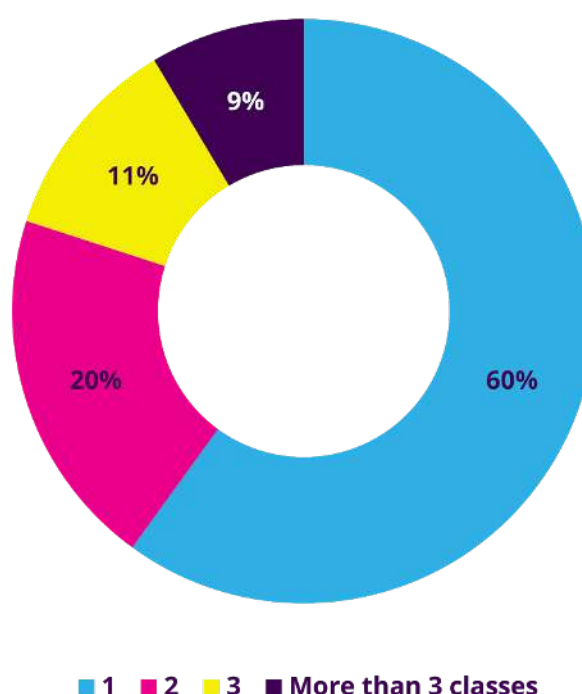
"My worry is that there could be certain students in the class who could use it as a platform for being offensive, even though they will have been warned against it ... However I am hoping to use the kit later in the year." — **Teacher, email feedback**

How Kits were used

Teachers who responded to either the regular follow up emails, or within the randomised sample¹⁰ to say they had used the Kit were invited to answer a feedback survey about their usage of the Kit.

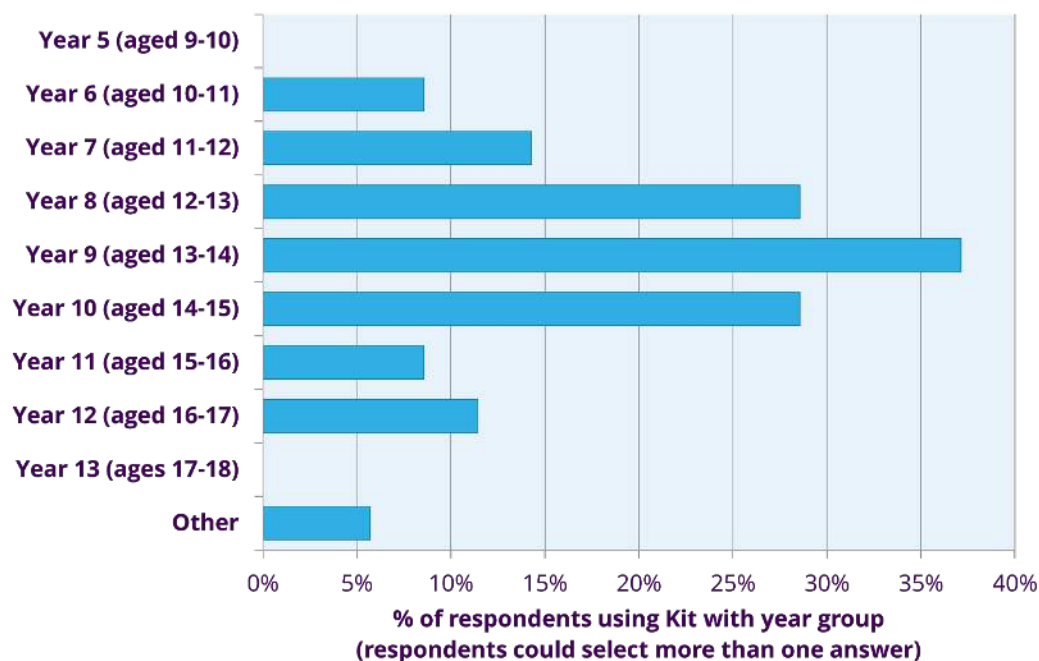
How many classes have you used the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit with? (n=35)

Most teachers responding to the feedback survey (60%) said they had used the Debate Kit with only one class. 40% had used the Kit with additional classes, and 20% had used the Kit with three or more classes.



¹⁰ See also: *Usage; How many Kits were used?*

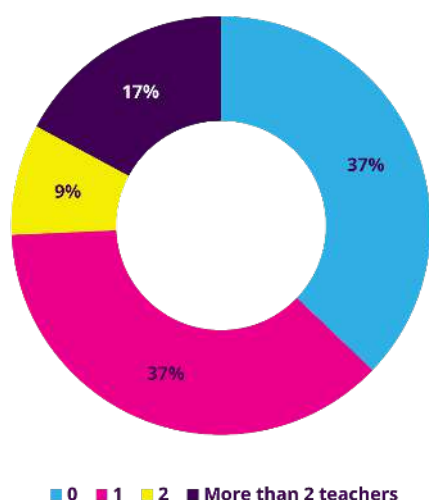
Which age group(s) have you used the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit with? (n=35)



The Kit was most commonly used with students between 12 and 15 years of age (Years 8–10). Three teachers reported using the Kit with Year 6 students.

Other responses included using the Kit with a Debate Club.

How many teachers have you lent the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit to? (n=35)



Nearly two thirds of teachers (63%) said they had loaned the Kit to another teacher, with only 37% keeping their copy to themselves. Add to this the feedback from teachers who had not used the Kit, where 46% of respondents said they had passed the Kit on to a colleague,¹¹ and it indicates that Kits are being used across school departments.

Do you intend to use the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit again? (n=35)

80% of teachers said they intended to use their Debate Kit again in the future. The rest reported that they were unsure; nobody reported that they would not re-use the Kit.

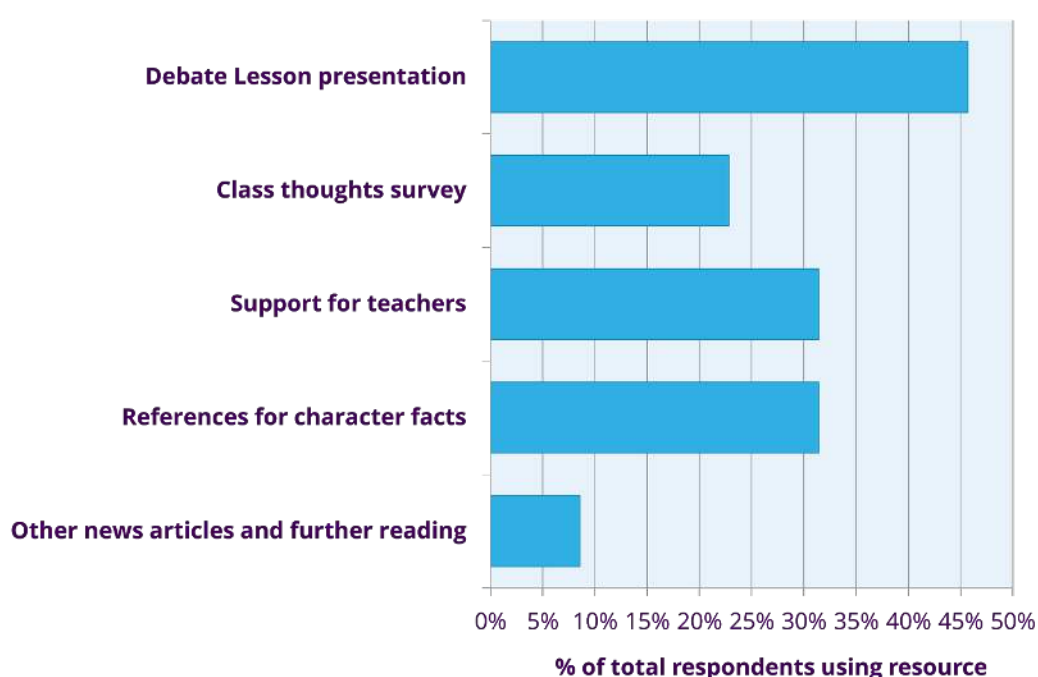
¹¹ See also: *Usage; Reasons for not using Kits*

Usage of additional resources and tools

Teachers were provided with a page on the Debate Kit site (debate.imascientist.org.uk/unisex-toilets-resources) with references and additional resources relating to the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit. **Between 1 February and 1 October 2019 this page was viewed 355 times.** This figure is significantly lower than the 1,941 page views the resource page for the previous kit received over a similar period.

As part of the feedback survey teachers were asked which of the additional resources they had made use of.

Which, if any, of the supporting resources have you used? (n=27)



27 teachers reported having used the additional resources provided, of which the Debate Lesson presentation proved most popular, being used by 46% of total respondents.

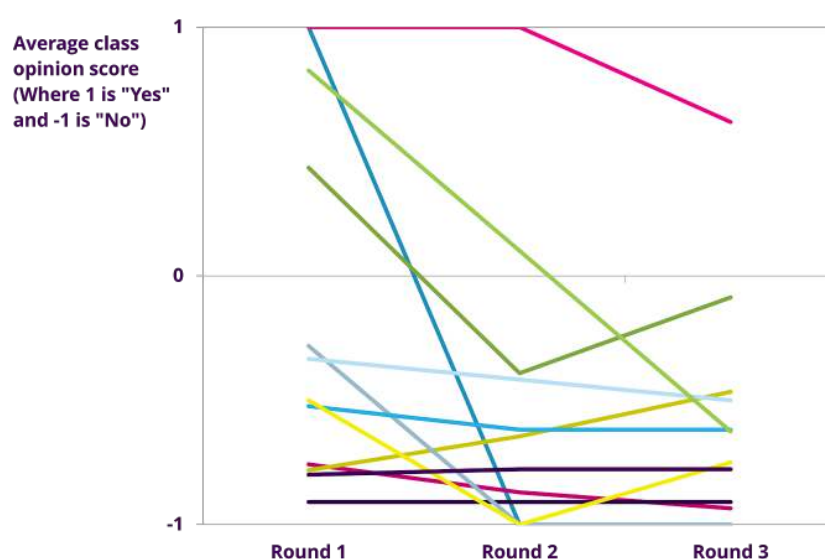
Additionally, a simple online survey was provided to teachers to enable them to track changes in students' views during the activity. At time of writing, 12 classes had provided counts for all 3 rounds of the debate. This is significantly lower than the previous debate Kit (where 62 classes provided counts for all 3 rounds) and indicates a smaller uptake of this resource for this Debate Kit.

At three points during the session — before starting the activity, at the midpoint, and at the end of the debate — teachers were to ask their students whether *schools should make all their toilets unisex*, and log the number of responses for each.

The chart shows how the opinion of each class changed over the three stages of the debate, with 1 representing 100% of the class voting “Yes”, and -1, 100% of the class voting “No”.

The average change in class opinion between the first and final rounds of the debate was -0.45.

The point here is not to give a definitive answer on whether school toilets should be made unisex; these data simply look at how students' views are changing during the debate, we see that students are reflecting on the issues raised in the debate.



After the debate had finished, additional questions were included to encourage the class to reflect on the activity; to share any key points that came up in their debate.

“They liked the different points of view and the fact that we were discussing very topical material.” — Teacher, class thoughts survey

“Really valid discussions and students were coming up with their own thoughts and experiences” — Teacher, class thoughts survey

Aims and achievements

After telling us they had used their Debate Kit, teachers were asked to fill in a feedback survey¹².

Teachers were asked what value they felt the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit had in terms of curriculum outcomes or other benefits to students:

Respondents valued the topical debate, and its ability to generate open-minded discussion around gender and sex:

"Able to use them as part of the B1 genetics 'what determines sex' lesson. Produces some excellent debate comparing gender and sex." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Helps promote gender inclusive aspects" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Students appreciate individual differences, privacy and being aware of self identity." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Very valuable when considering gender roles and stereotypical behaviours" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Debating skills (Literacy) as well as PSHE and SRE. We also used it as a writing prompt for a newsletter (Literacy)" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

Teachers also commented on how the Kit had encouraged and enabled students to consider different sides of the debate, and the opinions of others:

"Greater knowledge and understanding of both sides and different perspectives." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"It allows them to look at potential genetics in terms of a debate and how we discuss these in sensible terms without being rude about one another / our sex / gender." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"It's very much linked to rights and recent topical interest as a [nearby secondary school] had only unisex toilets for pupils. It was good to have an open discussion and enabled children to share their views well." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Makes them think about other people's viewpoints and good for teaching SMSC" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"It helps to structure discussion and broaden the different points of view being looked at beyond those of the loudest/most confident students" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

¹² See also: *Usage; How Kits were used*

A number of teachers highlighted the Kit's value in teaching debating and communication skills:

"Class discussion and participation by all students on current topic" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Encouraging oracy" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Helps with pro/con exam style questions and debating issues in general" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

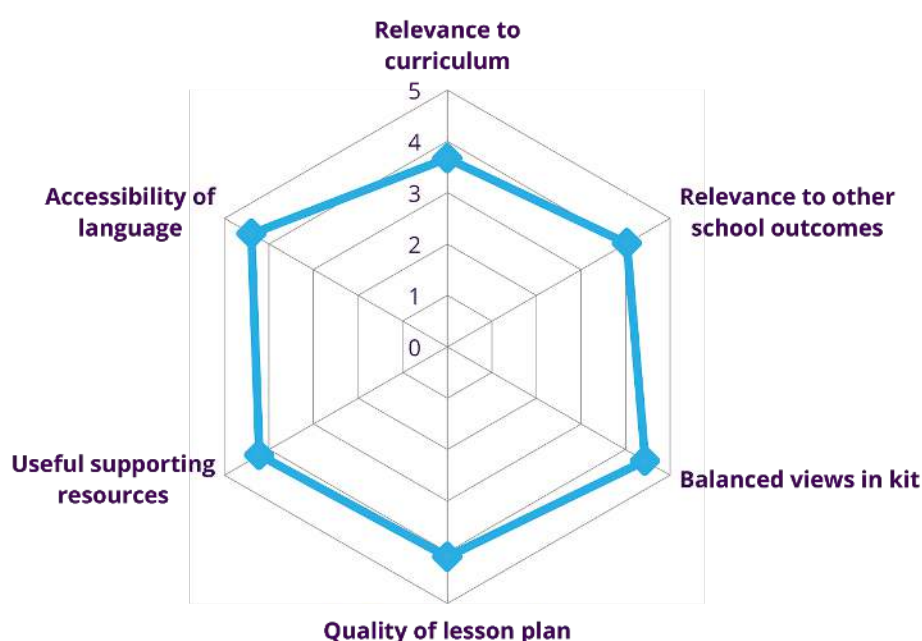
"I appreciate the unique nature of the activity in addition to harnessing the power of role play. Discussions were solid." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"We used this in our school debating society, it worked really well and promoted excellent discussion." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"We used it as part of a careers day to highlight transferable skills" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

Teachers were asked to give different aspects of the Debate Kit a star rating out of 5. The Kit scored well in all areas, particularly in terms of providing balanced viewpoints, and accessibility of language where teachers gave an average score of 4.4/5 for each.

How would you rate the Kit for the following? (Mean scores, n=32–34)



The Debate Kit scored the lowest in terms of relevance to the curriculum; that said, an average score of 3.7/5 is by no means a low score here, and is slightly higher than the previous Debate Kit scored in this area.

Teachers were asked to comment on what they liked about the Unisex Toilets Debate Kit:

Teachers appreciated the range of opinions covered in the Kit, with the balance of views being a common answer:

"Gave the children thoughts from both sides that they hadn't necessarily thought of themselves." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Range of views. Allowed students to feel comfortable about sharing their views" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"The kit was excellent at giving a balanced view and enabled students to see every side of a complicated story" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

Respondents also appreciated the topic of the debate, commenting that it "made students think", and was an "unusual topic" for a school debate:

"A very interesting topic for debate that really makes children think. Their initial reaction really changes throughout the discussion as it makes them more aware of transgender people." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"Good for generating discussion" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"It is a very emotive subject. Society seems to have changed dramatically in the last 20 years regarding gender, intersex, trans being things that most are aware of and need discussing. We as a society as a whole need to look at many areas to make more places accessible by all." — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"It is an unusual topic for a school debate" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

Teachers commented on the ease of use of the Kit, and how it engaged their students:

"Language is easy. Very accessible. Colourful resources and engaging" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

simple, well made and clear — **Teacher, feedback survey**

"The way it was structured and how it involved everyone" — **Teacher, feedback survey**

Teachers were asked how they thought the Kit could be improved:

One teacher noted that this particular debate was perhaps not the most relevant in a single-sex school:

“Adapt lesson to be outside of schools- difficult to present in single sex schools” —
Teacher, feedback survey

One teacher using the Kit with primary school children found it necessary to adapt the Kit slightly, leaving characters out where the language and topics were “a bit too grown up”:

“For year 6, some of the language and topics mentioned by the different characters were a bit too grown up. I had to leave some of the characters out.” — **Teacher, feedback survey**

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