

Education as resistance at Springboard



**Project Free Event
September 2025**

“

To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that **there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred**; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. **To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students** is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.

bell hooks

”



Springboard Youth Academy

Springboard exists to **bridge the gaps in provision** that limit newly arrived young people's ability to thrive.

It was initially set up as an alternative and radical educational space that could **address the unique needs of newly arrived young people**, as well as **hold, encourage and celebrate their identities, potential and personal power** as they navigate various violent government and institutional systems on their arrival to the UK.

Our programmes are designed to **supplement mainstream education access** so young people - including those who arrive too late in the year to secure a place in school, as well as those who are being age disputed - can progress along their desired education journey despite the systems that hold them back.



Our learners

The young people who engage with our programmes are in the process of seeking protection in the UK. Some systemic challenges they face:

- Confusing, racist and violent legal and bureaucratic systems
- One or more legal cases
- Hostility, racism and discrimination from the settled community
- Lack of appropriate, trauma-focused mental health support
- Starting from scratch in a new school context with teachers who may not understand their experiences



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Resistance lies in self-conscious
engagement with dominant, normative
discourses and representations and in **the
active creation of oppositional analytic
and cultural spaces.**

Chandra Mohanty

”



What resistance means to us

In line with the revolutionary thinkers who have shaped our practice, we understand resistance as twofold:

1. Pushing back against, or refusing to comply with, oppressive systems
2. Practicing freedom by creating new worlds, however small, that allow us to live the politics and practices that we want to build for the future

“Nobody can occupy your imagination.”

Rashid Masharawi





Resistance in our context

In our learning space, we avoid replicating, or actively resist, the following systems:

- The Home Office, the hostile environment and associated bordering practices
- Prevent and any other statutory policies that are centred on policing racialised bodies or promoting Islamophobia
- Safeguarding practices that fail to centre care and cause harm to children & YP
- Policing practices in the classroom
- Mainstream pedagogical methods that discourage critical thinking, challenge, and the use of home languages



Our pedagogical framework

1

Learning & Teaching Style

2

Radical Learning Space

3

Skills Acquisition

4

Holistic Wellbeing

5

Safeguarding

“

Progressive, holistic education, ‘engaged pedagogy’ is more demanding..it emphasises wellbeing. That means that **teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualisation** that promotes their own wellbeing if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students.

bell hooks

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Methods: learning & teaching style

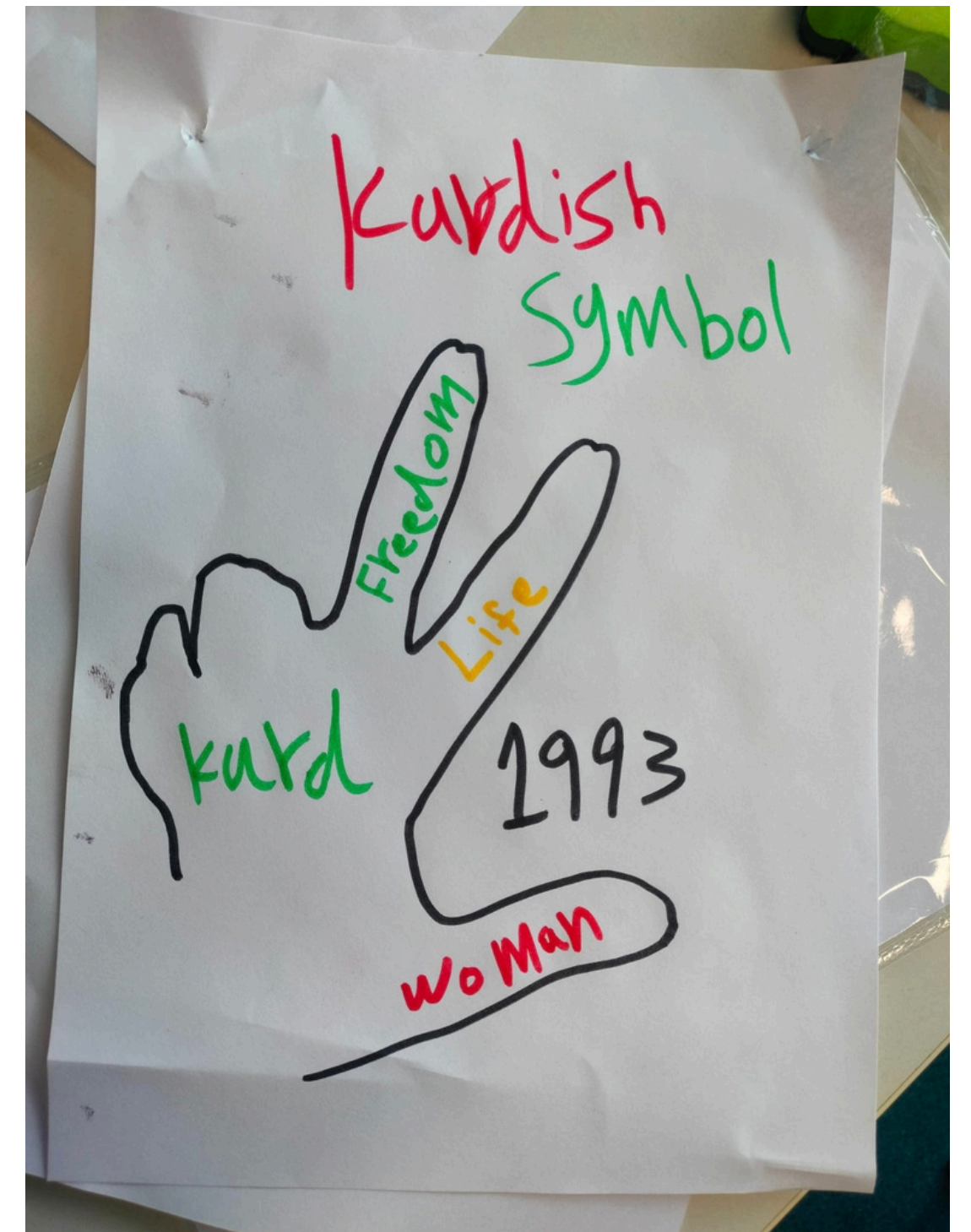
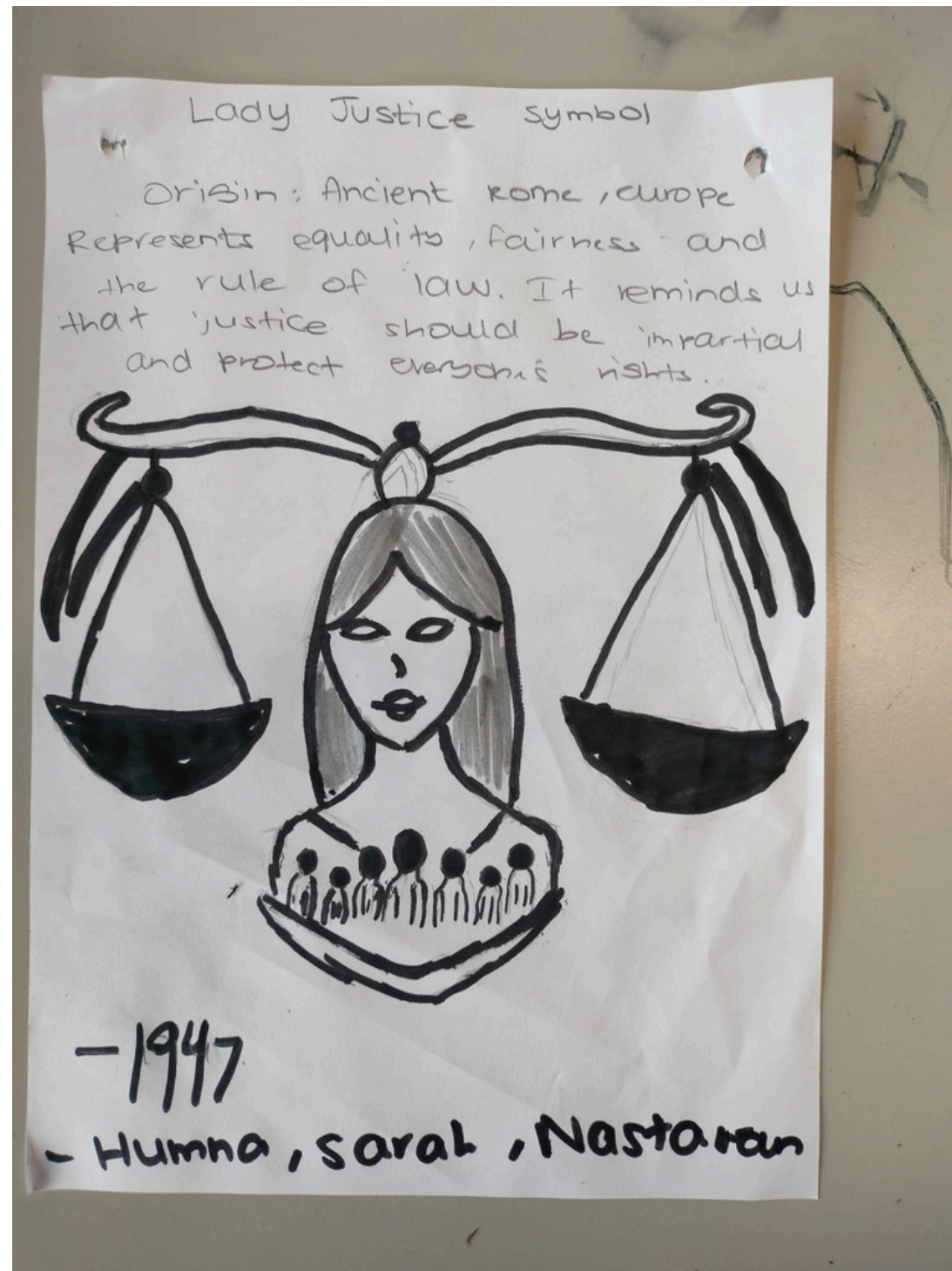
Resisting oppressive systems by...

- Facilitators encouraging YP to question everything
- Supporting critical consciousness amongst young people whose lives and identities are deeply politicised
- Team members expected to actively and consistently challenge their own assumptions





Personal & political self-expression

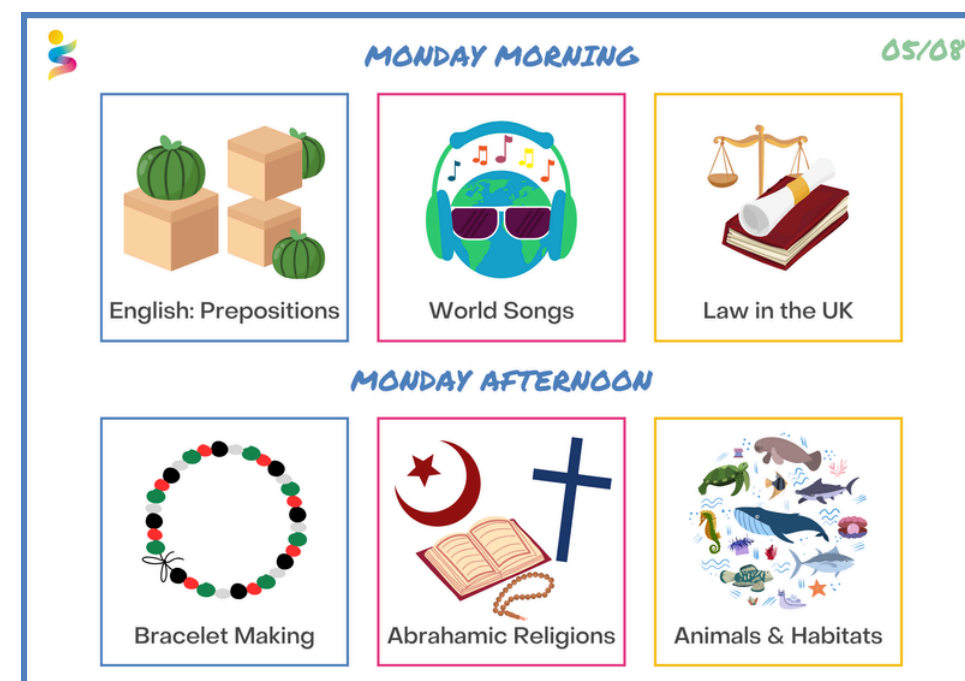




Methods: learning & teaching style

Practicing freedom through...

- Setting rules and guidelines for engagement together through group agreements
- Facilitators eliciting responses by questioning instead of telling
- Facilitators providing opportunities for debate
- Freedom for young people to choose how to participate
- Practicing our politics in and beyond the learning space



Before the debating workshop, I didn't have confidence. It was helpful to speak in front of people and to get feedback. Now my confidence is becoming more and more."

Saturday Programme participant, July 2025



Participant feedback

At college, they don't teach you properly. They just give you worksheets. They just tell you to read, or watch YouTube, or go to the library. At Springboard, you get to practise speaking. You can get more experience talking to students and teachers. It makes you feel more confident to speak English.”

Saturday Programme participant, July 2025



Methods: radical learning space

Resisting oppressive systems by...

- Opportunities for YP to share knowledge with / teach teachers; teachers not positioned as experts
- Celebrating and encouraging the use of home languages
- Curriculum decentres the Global North
- Curriculum uses topics that encourage critical thinking around social justice as an entry point for English learning
- Maintaining high expectations for YP and rejecting deficit approaches to learning

Springboard is [a place] for you to express what you have on your mind.

Saturday Programme participant, July 2025



Workbook Arc: Empire & Colonialism

COLONIAL GOODS



Colonisers often brought back products from the places they colonised.

Match the word to the picture:

WORD BANK

spices potatoes tea rice cotton
sugar coffee tobacco cacao gold



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WEEK 27



EMPIRE + COLONIALISM #2

As a result of **colonisation**, most countries in the world were controlled by **powerful, white Western Europeans**.



Many **people of colour** started to get fed up with this, and decided to **fight back**.



This was called the **Civil Rights Movement**. The aim of the movement was to guarantee all humans political and social **freedom** and **equality**.

This means that everyone has the **same rights**, regardless of skin colour, gender, nationality, religion, disability or age.



What rights do you think everyone deserves?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____



Do you know anyone who has fought for civil rights?

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WINDRUSH TODAY



WINDRUSH SCANDAL

Although the immigrants of the Windrush Generation did a lot to rebuild Britain, and make it a rich and powerful country again, many of them had problems after the 1970s, because of more strict immigration laws.

In 2017, people found out about the **Windrush Scandal**. It was discovered that many immigrants from the Windrush Generation had been wrongly accused of being illegal immigrants. Many of them were detained, denied legal rights, and even deported. Despite having worked so hard for the UK, including for the NHS, the country did not treat the Windrush Generation with respect.



DISCUSSION

Many of these people had spent decades in the UK.
How do you think they felt?
Why do you think the UK did this?
What does this say about how the UK treats immigrants?



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Workbook Arc: Labour, Capitalism & Employment



WEEK 13 LABOUR + CAPITALISM #1

Some of the richest people in the world:



Elon Musk 🇺🇸
\$195 BILLION



Jeff Bezos 🇺🇸
\$194 BILLION



Mark Zuckerberg 🇺🇸
\$177 BILLION



Bill Gates 🇺🇸
\$128 BILLION



House of Saud 🇸🇦
\$1.4 TRILLION



Arnault Family 🇫🇷
\$233 BILLION

DISCUSSION

What do they sell?
Who are these people?
Why are they so rich?

Where are they from?
How did they become so rich?

Jeff Bezos has more money than 55 countries combined:



DISCUSSION

Would you like to have all
this money?
Do you think it's fair?
What would you do with it?

3

SOCIALISM VS CAPITALISM

WORD BANK

government business the economy



_____ - all the systems of money, all the products and services that we buy and sell.



_____ - the people and institutions who manage a country (e.g. Boris Johnson).

_____ - a private company that sells products or services to make money.



Together, **government** and **business** organise **the economy**.

Sometimes the **government** controls all the economy.

Usually, this means everyone is **paid the same**.



This is called **SOCIALISM**.

Other times, **businesses** control all **the economy**.

This means people are **paid differently**.

Some people are paid a lot. Some people are paid very little.



This is called **CAPITALISM**.

In the UK and in Western countries, the economy is mostly **capitalist**.



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JOB CONTRACT

Job Contract

Salary

You will be paid £12 per hour for a total of 35 hour per week. This is an annual salary of £21,840 (before tax).

This section tells you how much you will be paid for your work.

Your rights & obligations

Your working hours will be from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

You are allowed a 1 hour break every day.

You must arrive 15 minutes before your shift.

You are entitled to 28 days **annual leave**.

This section tells you what you need to do for your employer and what they have to do for you.

Termination of Employment

You will have a **probation period** of 1 month.

If you are late 3 times, you may be fired.

If you want to quit, you must give us 2 weeks' notice.

If you agree to these terms, please sign below:

This section tells you what happens if you want to quit or your employer wants to fire you.

.....
Employer

.....
Employee

annual leave - paid holiday; days when you don't have to come to work but you still earn your normal salary
probation period - trial period; time at the beginning of a new job when you and your employer can change your mind



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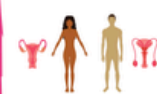
Workbook Arc: Gender & Sexuality

WEEK 25



GENDER AND SEXUALITY #3

We've already learned about the difference between **sex** and **gender**.



Sex is **biological** (it is about the bodies we are born with).



Gender is **social** (it is about identity, culture, and expression).



For many people, their **sex** and **gender** are **the same**. The body they were born with **feels right** and it **matches** their gender identity. These people are called **cisgender**.



But for other people, their **sex** and **gender** are **different**. The body they were born with **feels wrong** and it **does not match** their gender identity. These people are called **transgender**.



A **trans man** is a **man** who was **born biologically female**. He lives and identifies as a man.



A **trans woman** is a **woman** who was **born biologically male**. She lives and identifies as a woman.



There are some people who **don't feel male or female**. These people are called **non-binary** or **third gender**. Instead of he or she, they often use **they pronouns**.



None of this is new.

There have been **transgender** and **third gender** people in cultures and countries **all around the world** for **hundreds of years**.



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LGBTQ HISTORY



Throughout history, there have been many LGBTQ+ people around the world who have made a difference to our lives.

Match the name and picture of each person to their description.

1



ALEXANDER THE GREAT
(356-323 B.C.)

2



DAAYIEE ABDULLAH
(1954-)

3



GLENN BURKE
(1952-1995)

4



TIM COOK
(1960-)

5



BARBARA JORDAN
(1936-1996)

6



FRIDA KAHLO
(1907-1954)

7



SALLY RIDE
(1951-2012)

8



PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840-1893)

9



ALAN TURING
(1912-1954)



10



LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN
(1889-1951)

11



ALICIA GARZA
(1981-)



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GENDER STEREOTYPES



Write down your description of the perfect man and the perfect woman.



THE PERFECT MAN

PERSONALITY He is...	
JOB He works...	
EMOTIONS He feels...	
ACTIONS 👍 He can...	
ACTIONS 🙅 He can't...	



THE PERFECT WOMAN

PERSONALITY She is...	
JOB She works...	
EMOTIONS She feels...	
ACTIONS 👍 She can...	
ACTIONS 🙅 She can't...	

DISCUSSION

What is a stereotype? Where do they come from?

Can you give any examples of gender stereotyping?

How do these stereotypes impact the way people behave or are treated?

What can we do to challenge stereotypes as a society or as individuals?

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Methods: radical learning space

Practicing freedom through...

- Opportunities for YP to share knowledge / teach each other
- Peer support around classroom & behaviour management
- Joy, music, colourful session spaces
- Team members engage in reflective practice via daily debriefs to deconstruct practice and respond better to YP needs





Participant feedback

“I learnt how to communicate with others and make friends. When you talk to your friends [at Springboard], you improve your English but you also learn from them about their culture, their religion, their ideas. You compare something. You hear new words, ideas, and information. I learn from the teachers but I also learn from other people.”

Saturday Programme participant, July 2025



Questions?

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