



# HomeschoolNYC Newsletter

## *Celebrating Child-led Learning*

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*Going halfway around the world and returning just in time to start a new year of classes has delayed this newsletter somewhat. But now I can update you on some news and share some educational ideas. My playwriting students are simmering with characters, my teen lit club is discussing Don Quixote, and my tweens are about to read To Kill a Mockingbird. It looks like it's going to be another great year!*



[Laurie Block Spigel](#)

### **Down Under at HomeschoolNYC**

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## **Child-led Learning Down Under**

In August and September I went to Sydney, Australia, to teach a series of workshops for adults and children. For adults, I lectured on child-led learning and gave workshops on techniques in teaching oral and written communication. With teens, we wrote plays in just four days. In the final hour, several finished plays were read, without any time for rehearsal. For ages 8-12, we made board games. In the same amount of time, four days. Winter there was like springtime, and the children played and worked inside and outside, on the hills and at the beach. Topics for games included The First Fleet (the original settlers to Australia), Owls, Pirates, Helicopters, Art History, Baby Monkeys, Mythology, Mythical Creatures, Zebras, and more. Game Day was an explosion of fun!

[Click here to see playwriting students](#) at work in Sydney.

[Click here to see student board games](#), also at Nielson Park in Sydney.

## Thanksgiving from the Native Point of View

Schools and history texts perpetuate the myth of the first Thanksgiving, where white settlers thanked the Indians for their help with a huge feast. In truth, it was the Native people who made a habit of thanks, not the settlers who tended to respond to generosity with treachery. Historically, our Thanksgiving holiday... [READ MORE...](#)

[Click here for Websites on Thanksgiving from the Native Perspective.](#)

[Go here for Thanksgiving Books for Children.](#)

## Field Trips with Toys



In New York City, there are many places to go for toys and games beyond the usual, even places that will take us back in time. Here you will find a list of [NYC field trips with toys](#), taking you through history to modern technology, from a great artist's miniature circus to a workshop on making cornhusk dolls.

## Make Your Own Board Game

When my boys were young they made countless games, each one providing a rich learning experience. I was inspired to teach board games after my son Solomon made three increasingly sophisticated versions of his Whale Race Game.

Since that first class, I have seen an endless variety of boards and games. My students never fail to surprise me! Making a game is a course in research, game design, writing, communication, and creativity. The curriculum outline for the entire course is at the end of my book, [Education Uncensored](#). But all you really need is to give your child... [READ MORE...](#)

See photos of [Board Game Class in Sydney, Australia](#).

[See more board games made by students.](#)

Playing "Baby Monkeys" in Sydney, Australia



## In Memoriam Jim Hooson



On August 19, 2011, a great educational pioneer who was also my dear friend, Jim Hooson passed away, at his home in Sydney, Australia, in his sleep. At his memorial service, I met countless people who knew him. They each asked me, "How do you know Jim?" and I answered, "He changed my life," and they responded, "Me too!" Jim changed our lives because he understood children. He fought for them and rescued them from dire school situations ... [READ MORE...](#)

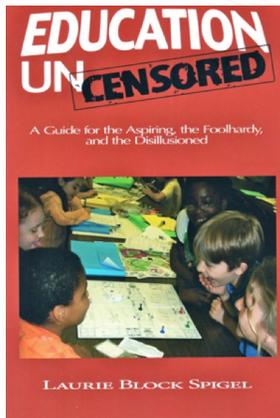
## Quote by Doris Lessing

"That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way."

~Doris Lessing (1919- ), British author, awarded the 2007 Nobel Prize in literature

## *Education Uncensored*

Laurie Spigel is a leading educator in the New York City homeschooling community, teaching popular group classes and inspiring parents to create their own curriculum. Her approach is informal, creative, and child-led. Here she shares her innovative ideas and original techniques for every subject. She explains why our current educational system has it all backwards and shows how exciting learning can truly be. A real source of inspiration as well as a practical guide, this is an eye-opening book for every parent and teacher.



Available now at [HomeschoolNYC.com](http://HomeschoolNYC.com)

Price: \$12.95 plus shipping & handling

[Read an excerpt.](#)

*E-mail comments and suggestions to [Laurie@HomeschoolNYC.com](mailto:Laurie@HomeschoolNYC.com).*

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