

Play and the Learning Value of Children's Museums

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Overview

- Literature Review
- Field-Wide Survey
- The Research Agenda
 - 2nd IMLS Grant

Literature Review: Purpose

- Set the stage for a National Symposium
- Identified what we know and don't know about learning in children's museums
- Articulates future directions for research

Literature Review: Search Tools

- Academic databases
 - ERIC and PsycINFO
- Informal education databases
 - www.informalcommons.org
- Museum professionals
 - VSA list-serv
 - Direct emails to researchers

Literature Review: Parameters

- All dates
- Primary sources
- Research *and* evaluation studies
- Focus on children's museum context

Literature Review: Study Methods (N=43)

- Study samples
 - 21 children
 - 11 parents/caregivers
 - 5 families
 - 6 other
- Study design
 - 14 evaluations
 - 10 synthesis papers
 - 9 descriptive articles
 - 4 experimental papers

Play in the Literature

- “The importance of physical, hands-on play”.
- “Caregivers frequently require or benefit from instruction on how to play.”
- “Parents do not necessarily understand the role of play in children’s museums”

Play in the Literature

- Role of caregiver in play:
 - 1) observer
 - 2) supportive/facilitator
 - 3) family role
 - 4) friend/playmate
 - 5) teacher
 - 6) supervisor/guardian.

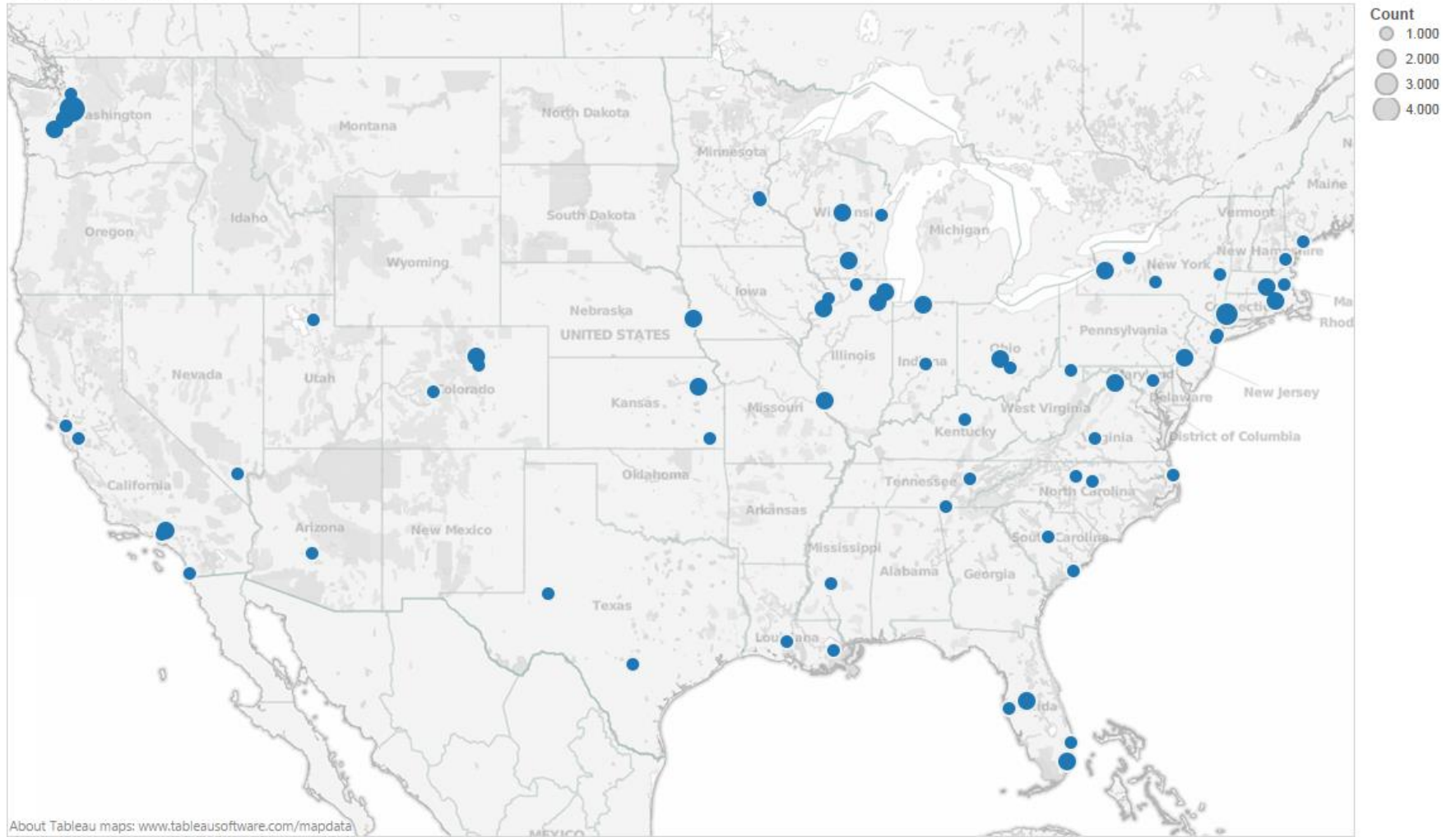
Focus on Learning

- Role of play one of two categories emphasized
- Identified three types of play:
 - Epistemic
 - Gaming
 - Ludic

Survey: Purpose

- Impacts children's museum aspire to have
- Research done for evidence of impact
- Theory, guiding principles, frameworks
- 117 responses

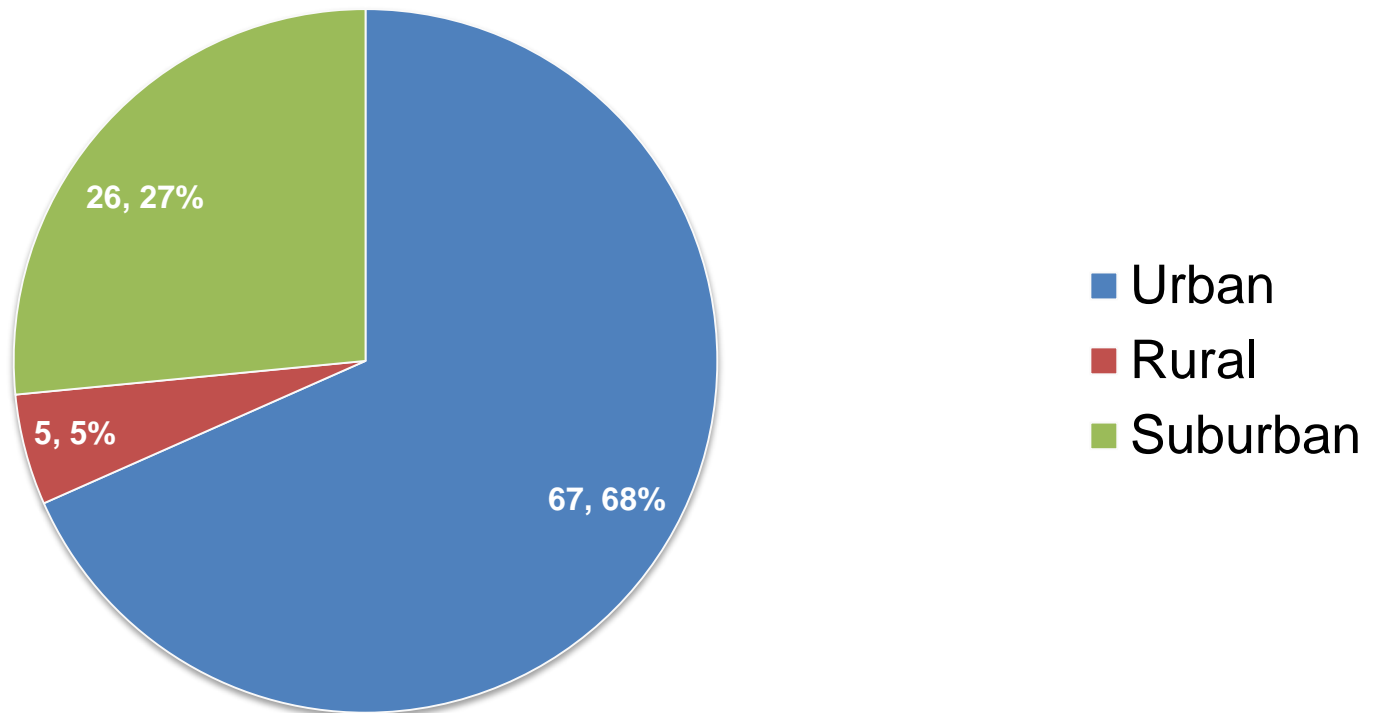
Responses by Zip Code



Map based on Longitude (generated) and Latitude (generated). Size shows sum of Count. Details are shown for National.

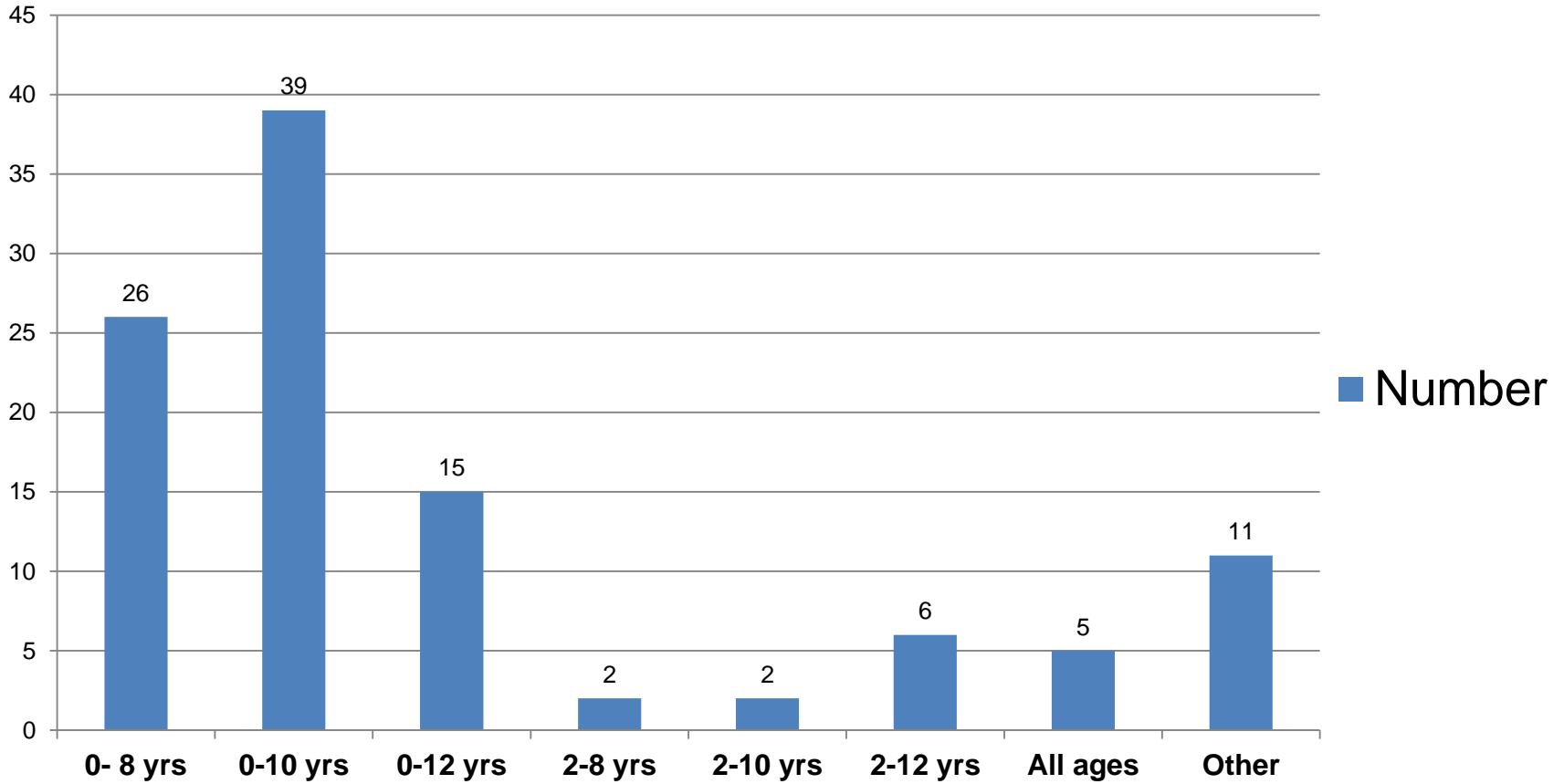
Survey- Sample

Museums by Community



Survey- Sample

Ages Served



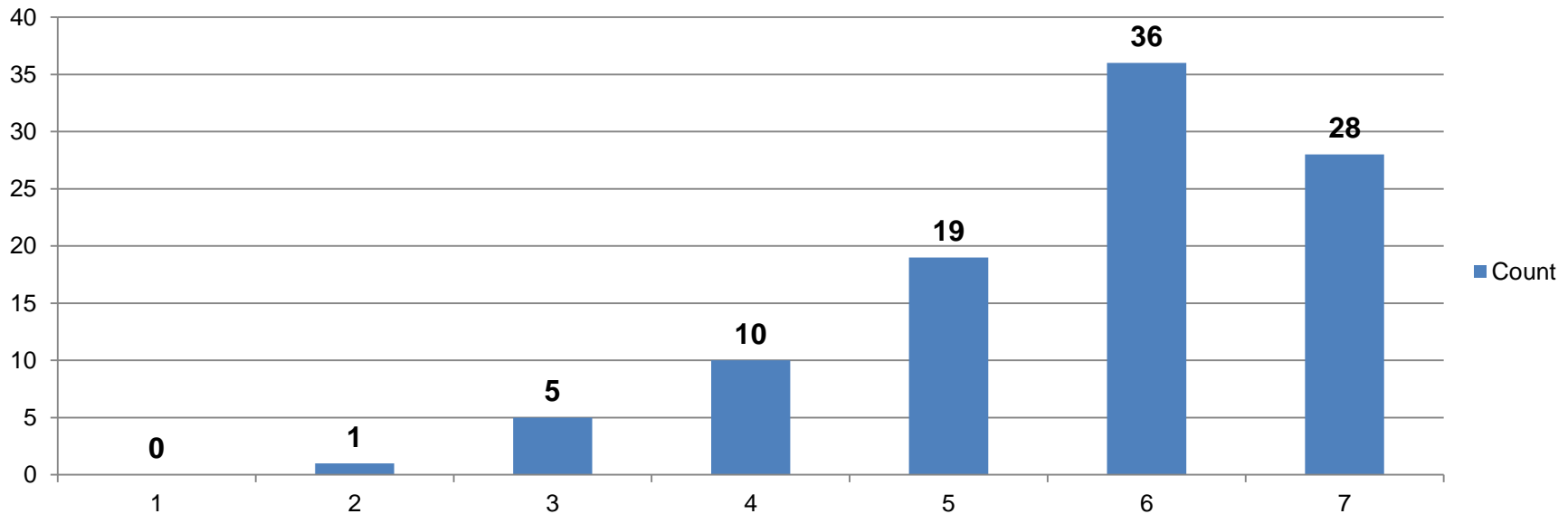
Survey: Results

- In your mind, how distinct are the impacts of children's museums as compared to other museums?

(Scale=1-7 where 1=entirely the same and 7=completely distinct)

(Avg. = 5.7)

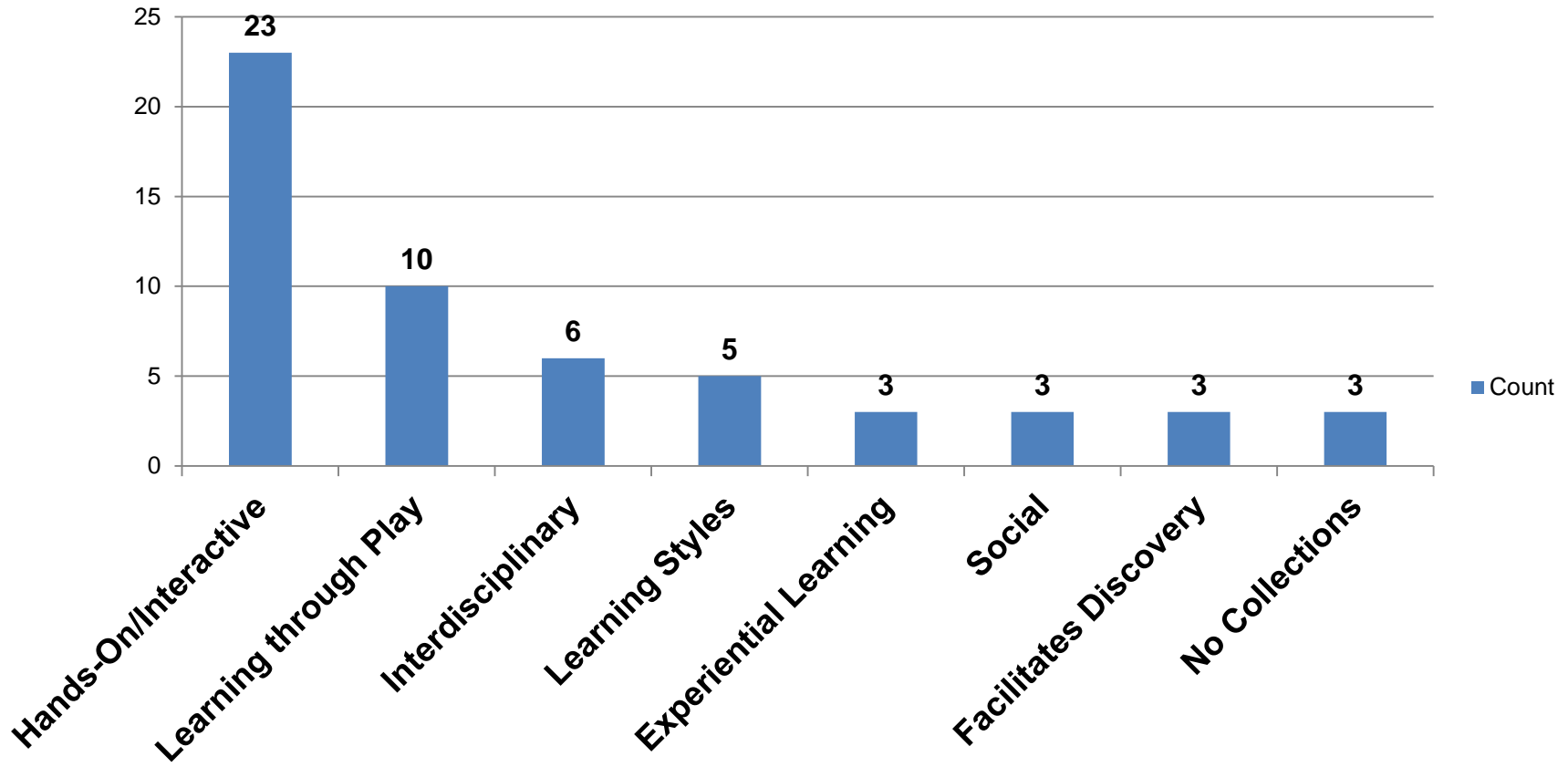
How Distinct



Survey: Results

Learning Experience

Top 8 Learning Experiences



Survey Snippets

“Emphasized the interactive, hands-on and play-based nature of the learning experience when highlighting what makes children’s museums unique.”

“Seek to create experiences that are interactive, hands-on, and play-based.”

Developing the Agenda

- ACM and UW: Learning Value of Children's Museums: Research Agenda Symposium
 - September 10–11, 2013
- ACM and UW: Four webinars
- Session at InterActivity 2014
- [*The Learning Value of Children's Museum Research Agenda.*](#)

Research Agenda

Characteristics

- Value and Impact
- Learning Environments and Strategies
- Museums as Learners

Audience

- Children's Learning
- Adult/Child Learning
- Ecosystem of Learners

Learning Landscape

- Cultural/Social Issues
- Community

Research Conversation

Jessica Luke

- "We Built a Field-wide Research Agenda for Children's Museums: Now What?"
- Monday, March 9th
- 12:00-1:30
- Bloedel 070

Time's Up!

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Feedback Time



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