



TOUCH AND LEARN: THE SOFT POWER OF MUSEUMS

Presented by Gail Lord, Lord Cultural Resources

Hands On! Conference, October 13, 2015

I Touch and I Understand



Please Touch Museum, Philadelphia, USA

I Touch and I Understand

Canada's Diversity Gardens, Winnipeg, Canada



Touching vs. Touching



Touch and Imagine

What we see



What kids see



Touch and Transform

What we see



What kids see



Touch and Laugh

What we see

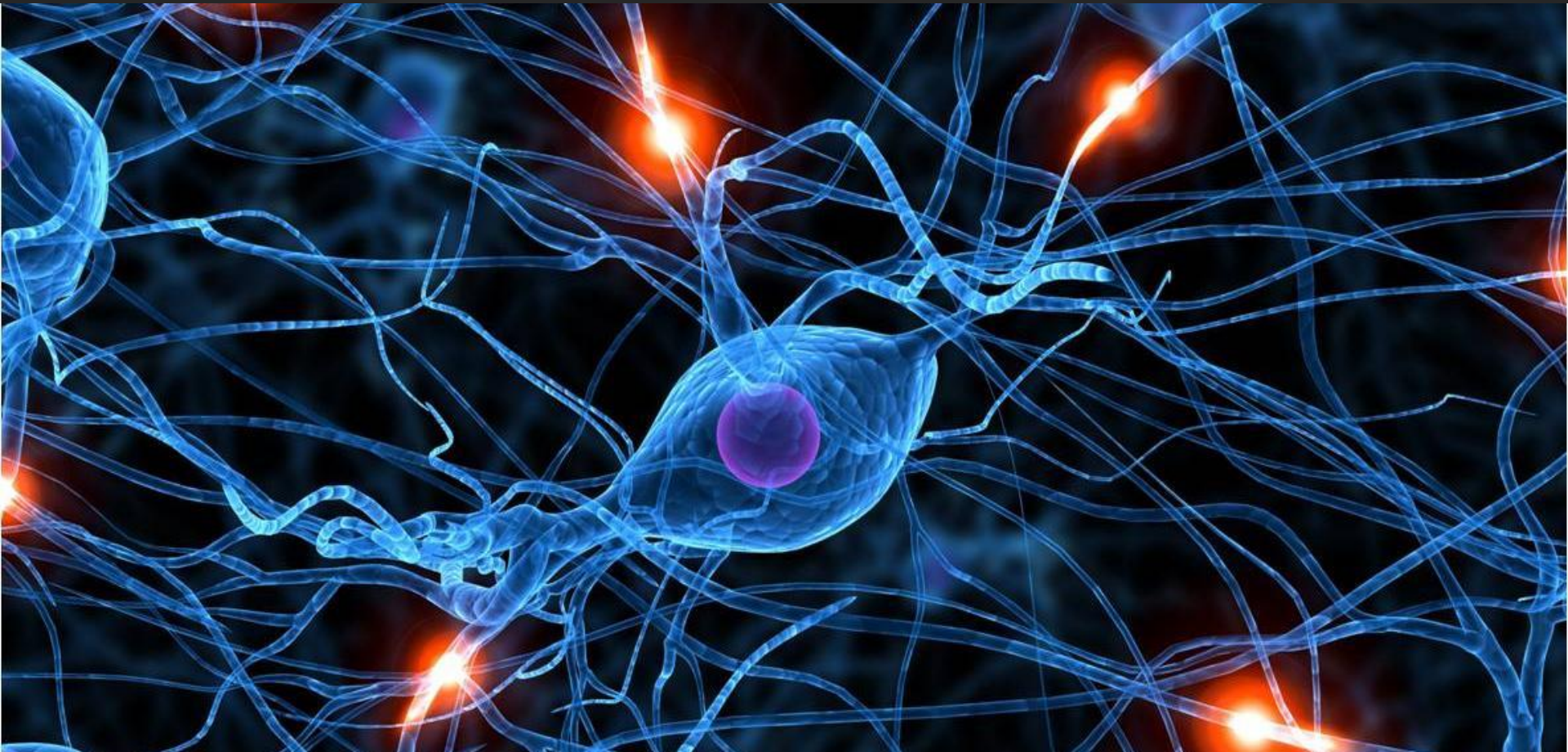


What kids see



Unlimited Potential

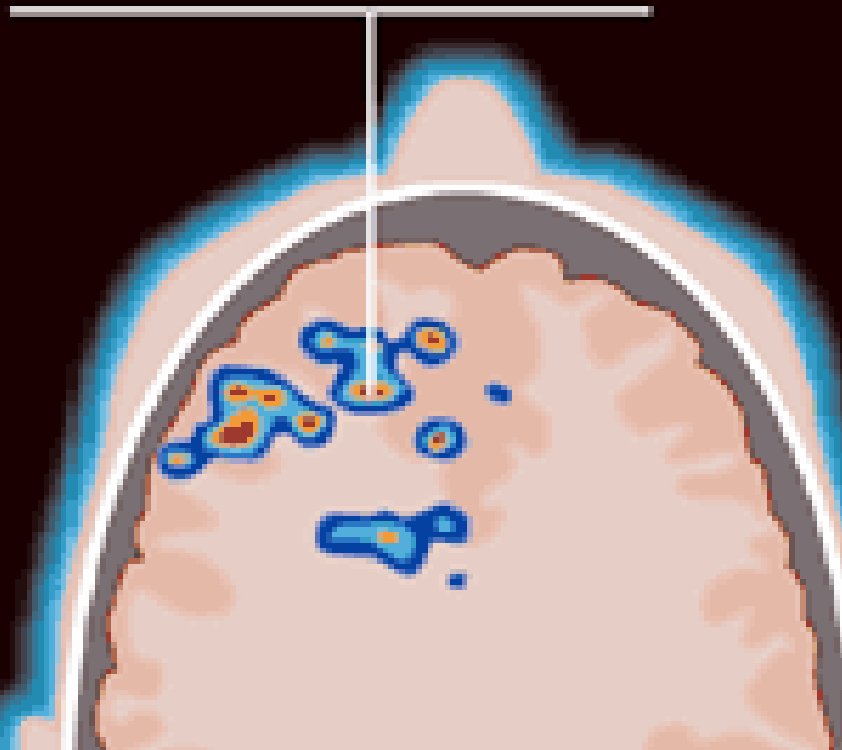
An infant has about 100 billion neurons. 15% can be lost as we age.
Each neuron can produce up to 15,000 connections (synapses) to other neurons
The first three years of life are when the vast majority of synapses are produced.



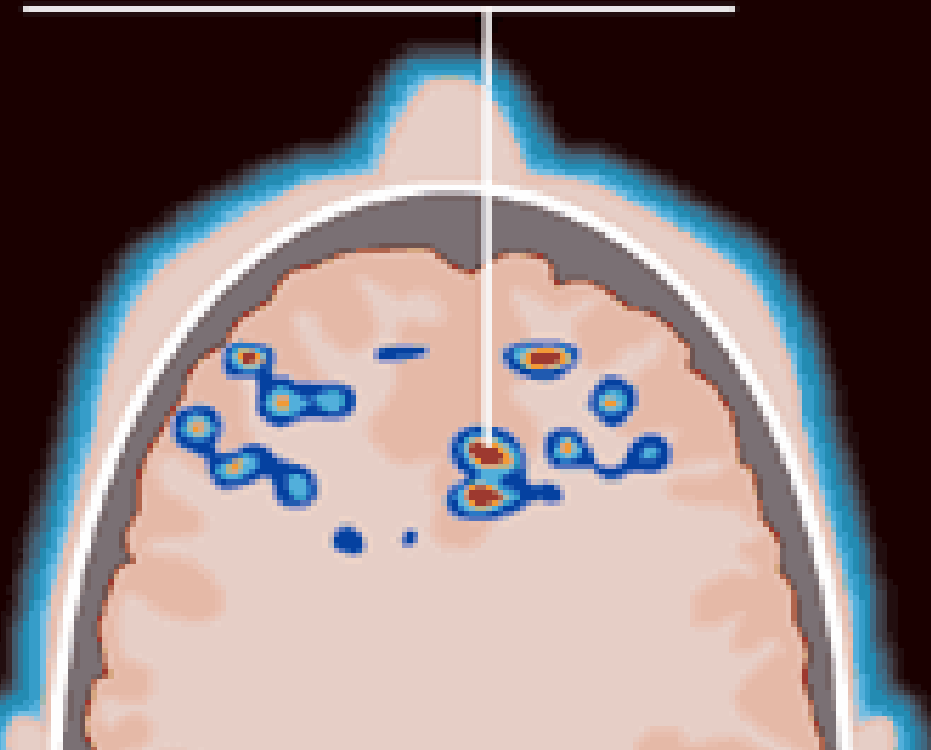
Brain development is "activity-dependent"

Every experience--whether it is seeing one's first rainbow, riding a bicycle, reading a book, sharing a joke--excites certain neural circuits and leaves others inactive. This is how learning occurs.

Activity at normal levels
when reading plain text



Sudden burst in activity
when reading Shakespeare



Brain Connections

While nature is responsible for the brain's basic wiring, experiences do change its actual structure. Brain development is "activity-dependent," meaning that neurons and synapses must be stimulated through environmental experience.

An individual's capacities are not fixed at birth.



Play is the Basis for Lifelong Learning



Learning in Museums

Patterns are emerging from studies of young children in museums that present a picture of how they **interact** with the **environments** and what kinds of **encounters with objects** are most **satisfying**.

The Attraction of the **Real Thing**



Peter Rabbit's Garden Travelling Exhibition

The Attraction of the **Real Thing**

Image: www.gemeentemuseum.nl



Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Netherlands

Familiar connections and contexts

Image: CBS News



Micropia Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Personal & social Interaction



Image: www.e-nemo.nl

Nemo Science Center, Amsterdam, Netherlands

The importance of story and imagination



Humour



Australian Museum,
New South Wales, Australia



A World of Beetles Exhibit,
Cleveland Museum of Natural History, USA

The Knowledge Economy is changing us as people

What is the Knowledge Economy:

- Science, engineering, R+D, health-care, finance, law, teaching, arts, music, culture, design, media.
- 100 years ago - about 10% of the population
- **Today - almost 50%**



Demands of the Knowledge Economy

In the Past

- Physical strength
- Follow orders
- Organized
- Some problem solving
- Memorization
- Basic communication
- OBSERVE

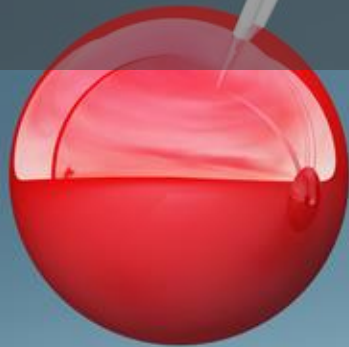
Today

- Intellectual strength
- Lead
- Individualistic
- All problem solving
- Improvisation
- Great communication
- PARTICIPATE!

Learning is changing in the **Knowledge Economy**

In the Past

- Results
- Listen
- Speak/Write
- Acquire Facts



Today

- Process
- Dialogue
- Many Methods
- Create Ideas



So Many Choices...

- Digital content
- Self directed
- Learning labs
- Maker spaces



Roding Primary and Nursery School, UK



Fablab Amsterdam, Netherlands



So Many Challenges...



Crowd along Ladbroke Grove during the Notting Hall Carnival, Photo: Wikipedia

So Many Challenges...



- Children (ages 0-19) represent 33% of the world's population. 50% of them live in urban areas.
- In Europe, 70-80% of children live in cities.

So Many Challenges...



© UNICEF/NYHQ2008-0138/Giacomo Pirozzi

- 11% of children in the EU are severely affected by material deprivation meaning they are unable to afford goods and services considered necessary.

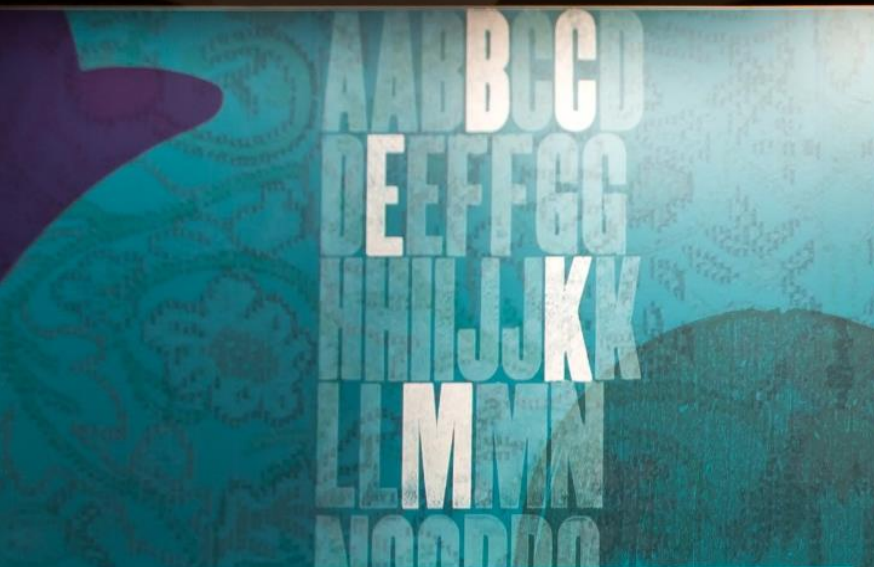
So Many Challenges...

- An estimated 20 million children have been forced by conflict or human rights violations to leave their homes worldwide.
- One third are refugees who have been driven across national borders. The other two thirds are internally displaced.



Image: d.ibtimes.co.uk

New **Leadership** is Emerging



**One child, one teacher, one
book, one pen
can change the world.**

SOFT POWER

Soft power is the ability to influence behaviour through **persuasion, attraction or agenda setting.**

Children and **Soft Power**



Craig and Marc Kielburger
Free the Children



Hannah Taylor
The Ladybug Foundation

Children and **Soft Power**



African Movement of Working Children and Youth in Africa

"Yo Soy 132" Movement

Children and **Soft Power**

Albany Park Theatre Project, Home/Land, Chicago



15

WAYS TO ACTIVATE *your* SOFT POWER

Tips for

Children and Youth in Museums

POWER DIFFUSION: GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES



1
Advisory Councils:
Listen to Children,
Youth, Schools and
Families

2
Diverse Staff for
diverse audiences

3
Trained Staff to
Build Skills

Responsive
Operating Hours

Free Admission

5

SOCIAL COMMONS: OPERATIONS



4
Empower Women:
be the Best
Employers in the
Creative Economy

Active Social
Inclusion Among all
Children, Youth and
Families

ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES: RESEARCH



8
Measuring and
Sharing Impact

9
Reflect Current
Research on Child
and Youth
Development,
Learning

CULTURAL ACCELERATION: EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS



10
Connect with Others
who Work with
Children, Schools
and Families

THE SHARING ECONOMY: PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS



Critical Thinking

12
Encourage Making,
Tinkering and
Creating

13
Build 21st Century
Skills

14
Address Real World
Challenges

15
A Safe Place to
Explore, Participate,
Connect and Have
Fun



HOW DO YOU ACTIVATE
YOUR SOFT POWER?

Intermission

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Crowd along Ladbroke Grove during the Notting Hall Carnival, Photo: Wikipedia

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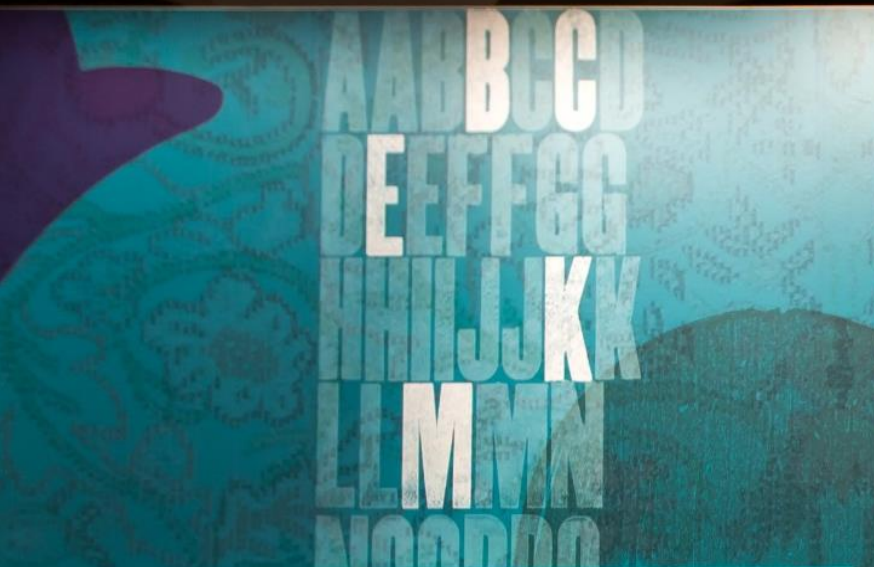
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**POWER DIFFUSION:
GOVERNANCE AND
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**SOCIAL COMMONS:
OPERATIONS**



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Employers in the
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Active Social
Inclusion Among all
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**ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES:
RESEARCH**



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**CULTURAL ACCELERATION:
EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC
PROGRAMS**



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who Work with
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**THE SHARING ECONOMY:
PARTNERSHIPS AND
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**HOW DO YOU ACTIVATE
YOUR SOFT POWER?**

POWER DIFFUSION: GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES



Empower Women:
be the Best
Employers in the
Creative Economy

1
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Listen to Children,
Youth, Schools and
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Diverse Staff for
Diverse Audiences

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Trained Staff to
Build Skills

1. Advisory Councils: Listen to Children, Youth, Schools and Families

Children's Council of the Museu Blau, Barcelona, Spain



Image: museuciencies.cat

2. Diverse Staff for Diverse Audiences

Asian Civilisation Museum, Singapore



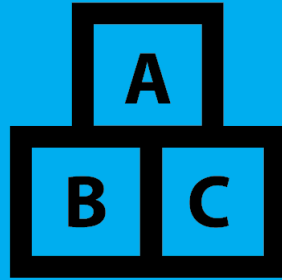
Image: acm.org.sg

4. Empower Women: be the Best Employers in the Creative Economy

Image: foundlingmuseum.org.uk



SOCIAL COMMONS: OPERATIONS



Responsive
Operating Hours

6

Free Admission

5

Active Social
Inclusion among all
Children, Youth and
Families

7

5. Free Admission

Cool Culture, New York, USA



6. Responsive Operating Hours

Providence After School Alliance, After Zone Program, Providence, USA



7. Active Social Inclusion Among all Children, Youth and Families

Department of Making and Doing, Philadelphia, USA



ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES: RESEARCH



Measuring and
Sharing Impact

8

Reflect Current
Research on Child
and Youth
Development,
Learning

9

8. Measuring and Sharing Impact

9. Reflect current research on Child and Youth development, Learning



THE SHARING ECONOMY: PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS



Connect with others
who work with
children, schools and
families



10. Connect with Others who Work with Children, Schools and Families

Foundling Museum, London, England



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Foundling Museum, London, England



10. Connect with Others who Work with Children, Schools and Families

Daniels Spectrum, Toronto, Canada



CULTURAL ACCELERATION: EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS



Critical Thinking

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Encourage Making,
Tinkering and
Creating

12

Build 21st Century
Skills

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Address real world
challenges

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A Safe Place to
explore, participate,
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11. Critical Thinking

Nobel Peace Center, Oslo, Norway



12. Encourage Making, Tinkering and Creating

Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Netherlands



13. Build 21st Century Skills

Ipswich Art Gallery, Light Play Exhibit, Australia



Image: www.ipswichartgallery.qld.gov.au

14. Address Real World Challenges

Zoom Children's Museum, Plastic Exhibit, Vienna, Austria



14. Address Real World Challenges

Verzetsmuseum (The Dutch Resistance Museum), Amsterdam, Netherlands



15. A Safe Place to Explore, Participate, and Connect

National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, USA



THANK YOU.



@Gail_Lord
#softpowercities
#softpowermuseums



MuseumsSoftPower

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