Engagement in AD:
So Simple, and yet So Complex

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In this presentation

1. Why engagement?

2. But... What exactly is engagement?

3. Toward a theoretical proposal of engagement in AD.

4. Some strategies that could (perhaps) enhance engagement in AD

5. Please remember that...

1. Why engagement? (I)

❑ Informal conversations with BVI who stated:

  ▪ "I don't always enjoy AD. Some times I feel as if I had to work. I feel frustrated and I can't enjoy the movie."

  ▪ "In some films the narrator's voice doesn't work. The killer is chasing his victim and you hear this plain voice saying 'he opens the door'. It kicks me out of the story."

❑ AD guidelines and training documents state:

▪ "(…) providing description of the highest quality to engage the partially sighted audience fully in the story." (AMI & CAB, 2014).

▪ "The aim [of AD] should be to enhance the enjoyment of a program." (Ofcom, 2017).

❑ No clear definition in the literature.

❑ Inconsistent and confusing use
 of three key terms: engagement,
 immersion and enjoyment.

❑ A variety of models of narrative/
 media engagement and enjoyment.

❑ Based on Busselle & Bilandzic (2008, 2009).
  ▪ Mental models approach

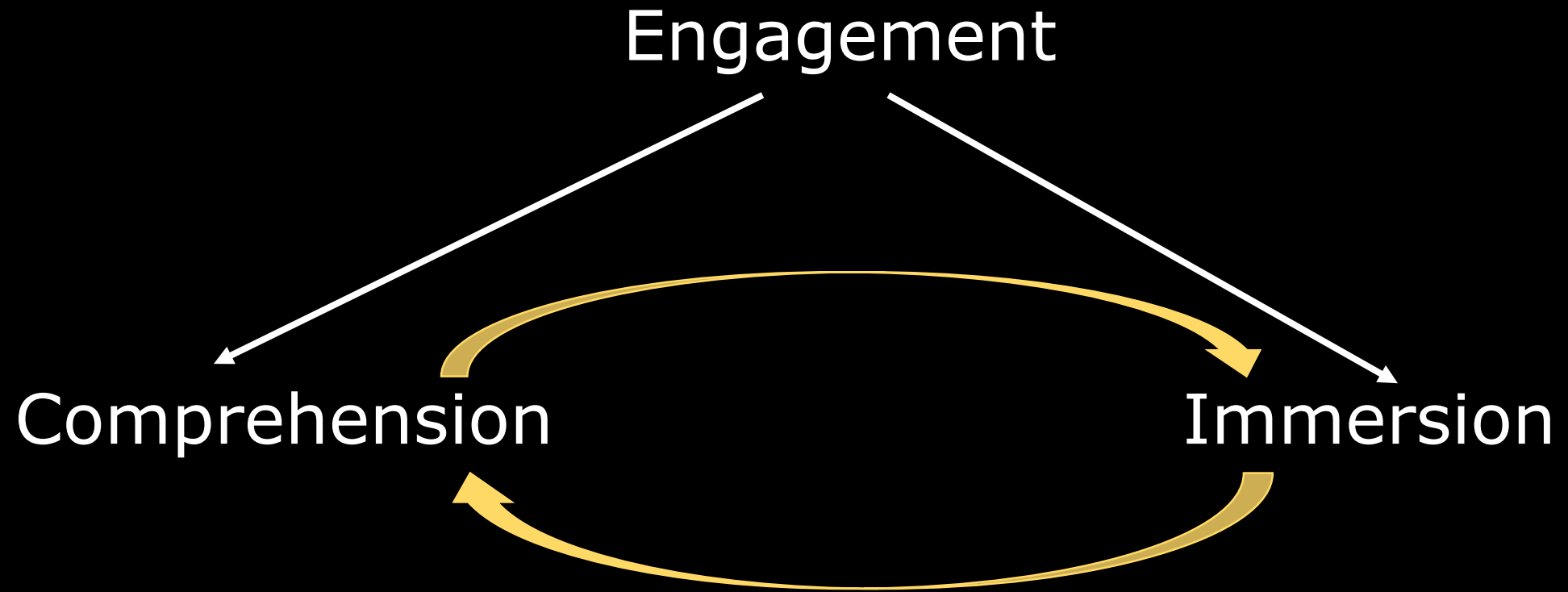❑ With comprehension and immersion as essential processes for engagement.

Engagement:

State in which audiences are drawn into and keep interest in the story. Engaged spectators wish to know what will happen next.

NEEDS:

❑ **Comprehension:** reached through the creation and updates of mental models on the situation, characters and events.

❑ **Immersion:** "the experience of being transported to an elaborately simulated place (…). We seek the same feeling from a psychologically immersive experience that we do from a plunge in the ocean or swimming pool: the sensation of being surrounded by a completely other reality." (Murray, 1997: 98).
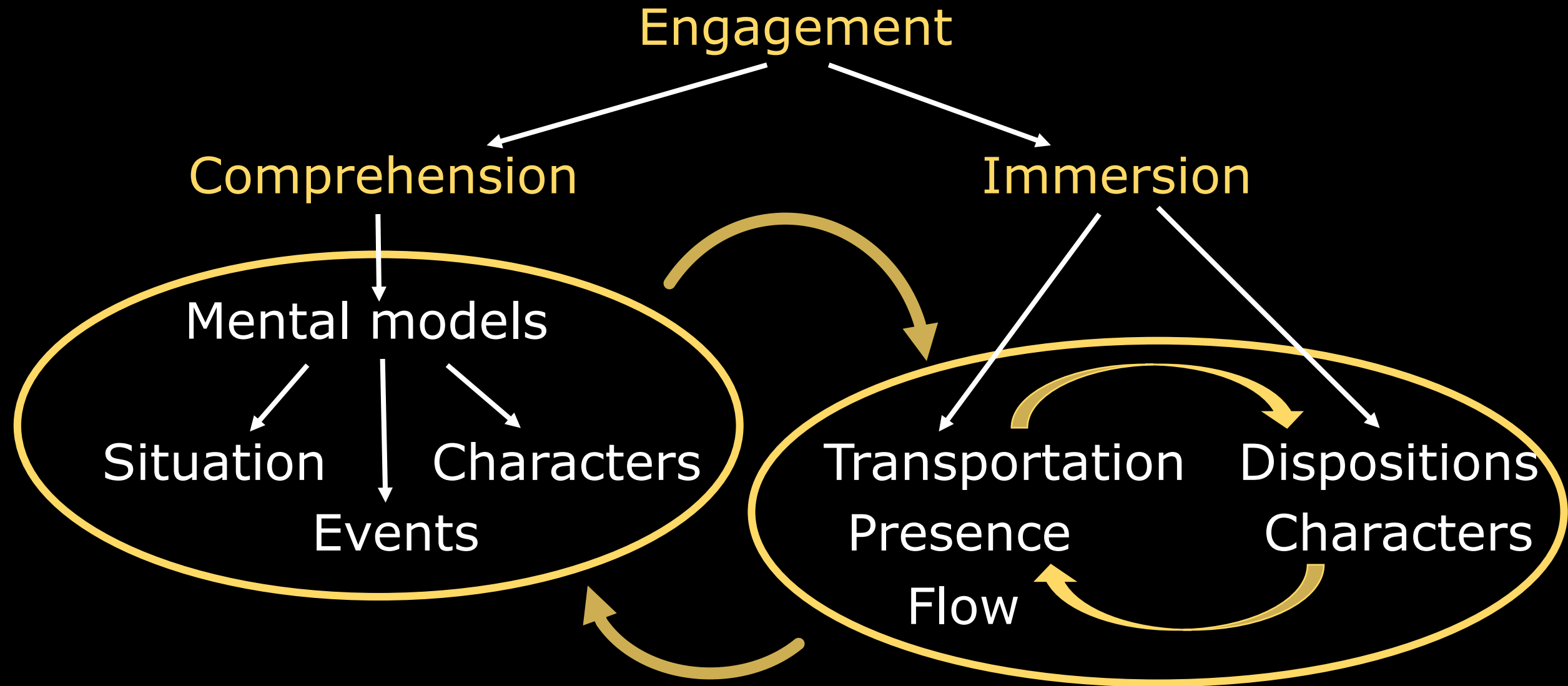
Real world → **Attention** → Fictional world

4. Some strategies that could (perhaps) enhance engagement in AD

❑ Technical strategies

- High quality final mix

    Positive impact in comprehension and immersion

- Narration (Voice & Intonation)

    Are we sure that "neutral" is always better, especially in terms of immersion?

❑ Script-related strategies (I)

▪ Amount of AD info
  (+/- info)

▪ AD delivery speed
  (fast/slow narration)

▪ Presentation of AD
  (e.g. long/short chunks of AD)

Affect cognitive load, comprehension & immersion

Individually but possibly through their interaction.

Could we modulate them taking into account the original film (length, narrative complexity and density of dialogues) in order to reduce cognitive load?

❑ Script-related strategies (II)

▪ Style of AD (neutral/expressive)

Vivid ADs might help immersion

▪ Degree of interpretation (objective/± interpretive)

Could a certain degree of interpretation be used to help comprehension & immersion (especially in cognitively demanding films)?

5. Please remember that…

❑ This is a theoretical proposal that needs empirical research.

❑ Work in progress.

❑ Feedback highly appreciated!

References

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Thank you!

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