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Assignment #1: Reading "love in the time of cholera" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

There is something about Marquez stories that consumes your real existence and transforms it into a dream. This is not the first book of Marquez that I was reading so I was kind of prepared to what's going to happen to me. But still, I am much older now, I have family, I have responsibilities and a full schedule. For sure I will be able to control it better this time. I started reading the book, after few pages my daughter asked me something. I could still stop and help her with what she needed. I continued reading. On the third chapter; I could not put the book down. I cooked while reading, took a bath, put my daughter to bed and clean the kitchen while reading. My mind was immersed in the story. When I read everything seemed live and clear in my mind. I saw the environment clearly, I heard the sounds described, I smelled the food, I felt everything that was going on, I thought only of what is going to happen next. The real world became num. I vaguely heard, people talking to me, I sensed what going on around me but as if I was inside of a plastic bubble. I did what I had to do but in an automatic way. I didn't sleep that night. I went to work around 12, after finishing the book. The world seemed different to me after reading the book. Everything was filtered through the saturated experience of the world in the book. That day everything seemed as an extension to the story. I felt high, fulfilled, and special. As if this story was written especially for me and only I understand it the way it should. I looked different to the people that know me, as if I went through something very emotional and meaningful. Few days after I finished the book, I kind of felt empty, as if realizing the fact that it was just a story, that didn't have to do anything with me. It was an experience, a great one, but it had passed and it's time to find the next one.

Computer games:

- Sims – Social life simulator
- Myst – Quest

Both games are potentially "laid-back" games. There is no time issue here and no exceptional motor skills needed. However both games have an addictive, or maybe better, engaging qualities to them.

In the sims game, you build a character with a certain personality and you inject it into the world. Your goal is to keep your character happy. You can do it by providing it food, hygiene, rest, entertainment and social encounters. You need to balance all of those things on top of finding her a job and making sure she is earning money and this is not a simple task. The engaging part of the game is the challenge to keep the balance. You cannot leave the game when the character is not happy. In a way the character becomes you and you feel lousy when the character feels lousy. So you say to yourself, I'll just improve her social skills and then I'll leave, and before you know it 3 hours had passed.

In Myst, first and for most, you are drawn to the graphics. When this game came out it was astonishing and all you wanted to do is explore more and see as much as possible from the art. The game is a riddles' game. You are stuck in a certain screen till you figure out how to solve something, navigate in a certain way or find a secret path. The engaging part of that game is, as I said before, the graphics, and the intellectual challenge. You must crack this thing. First time I played this game I played it for 28 hours straight. I tried going to sleep, but all my mind did was keep solving the puzzle so I had to go back to the game.

The common attributes of these games in relation to deep engagement are challenge, identifying – being part of the game and not a third party that manipulates the interface, very much goal oriented, fear of failure.

List of attributes for engagement:

It seems there are different attributes for passive engagement (listening to music, seeing a movie, reading a book) and active engagement (creating something, manipulating something)

Active attributes: (similar to the "flow" attributes"

1. Challenge
2. Goal oriented – can be dynamic goals.
3. Perform a skill
4. Feeling of uniqueness.

Passive attributes:

1. Let the imagination take over real life

2. Belonging
3. Reflection

Combined attributes:

1. Immersion
2. Strong sensory input or impression
3. Growing – learning new things

