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Assignment 4: critical reflection

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Modeling choices:

Strategic design: model/elements with phrase level encoding.

Once I have my elements organized, I begin to create model to combine the phrase-level encoding. My biggest challenge in early drafts was nesting these elements and then making necessary adjustments. Creating a model makes this manageable as I only need to update in one place. Organizing my elements makes creating and adjusting a model manageable.

Nesting and validation with phrase-level elements is a challenge in all my drafts.

My first efforts reference individual elements to a larger structural element, which I discovered was unmanageable. To solve this problem, I organized my layers more precisely so that I could then more effectively map the wrappers, large, intermediate, small, phrase level elements. Once I did this, I could create new models as I need them. At this point, I have two phrase-level models: one for intermediate chunks and one for small chunks. I also have a model for marginalia-type things like catch words, publisher sig, page numbers, page breaks, page borders.

Why did I make the decisions I did?

My objective was to keep the verbosity to a minimum, and to keep scalability in mind. My decision-making process was to first dive in and see what happened, and then organize

strategically. On one hand, my HTML background is helpful with this because I did so much by hand, using notepad, and so am familiar with the look of code page and integrate validation as I go. I am also familiar with building mini-code templates and compound elements. On the other hand, it is a challenge to think in terms of context, as opposed to display. For this reason, I feel my process has taken more time than I expected.

Once I had a basic vocabulary, I could set up my structural containers. I did the basic structures first, and then went back to enter progressively complex encoding. My approach was pragmatic as I let the documents guide me. I did a validation check with every adjustment to the schema. I had to be sure to update my documentation, which turned out to be a challenge as I experimented a lot. At one point, I had to check each entry, which was painful as I had to check all the various combinations. Overall, I learned how useful model element are!

Kinds of rational that motivated my decisions.

My resources: time and timeframe, scope, templates, observation text.

I began with structure, and then moved into expression as worked through each document. I tried to keep my structural units straight so that I could nest properly. Once I had a workable system in place, I could focus more on how to differentiate the various dimensions of meaning and think about nuance. I appreciate this shift, as I must think and observe differently that I do with HTML.

As this is my first, my approach is to be as simple as possible in order to be able to figure out what works. I did several drafts to get my feet wet. When I felt a little more confident, I used word to create outline notes for nesting, working off the pseudo-schema template. As with my schema drafts, I worked through drafts with the template. To prepare for my final draft, I created

memo notes for nesting in conjunction with a list. I used these tools to create my documentation, which I created with the pseudo-schema template. With these tools plus my final draft documentation in hand, I organized my schema design with comments into sections that would allow me to find them easily. Searching can take up so much time, so I am always trying to streamline. Plus, I feel the relationships, or affinities, between elements is how I will build my design skills

My schema design emerged from my observation of my first text, the "Women of London Petition". My approach to the design has been pragmatic. However, I know I want to create something that I can reuse and adapt, so I tried to embed flexibility. Model elements are so helpful for this. Otherwise, I realize how much I had to learn!

To help me embed flexibility, I organized my elements and adapted element name, function, documentation from my resources: the TEI crib sheet and WWP tutorials. The elements in my first drafts were idiosyncratic in terms of name and function. Keeping in mind that I want this schema to be scalable, my WWP training sessions led me to compare and integrate my idiosyncratic elements with TEI and XML, and so my elements and attributes are more standardized.

Potential impact these decisions might have on the ways your data could be used: scalability: search engines; visualization?

My scalability challenges: Time; Standardization with names and function.

A challenge for me is to remember that this encoding must speak to a computer as well as encode certain dimensions of context. At first, my perspective was as an artist. My approach was as if this encoding was a creative medium. Which it is, but not as a unique art object. Rather, the generative quality of this medium has to do with its relational dimension in an expanded field, to

borrow art theory concept. A discussion of an art object in/of/as an expanded field is beyond the scope of this reflection but refers to art in terms of systems, process, and contingency as opposed to less dynamic characteristics embodied by the production of a specific object.

Visualization

As an encoder, my challenge is to extract what matters through the integration of a text's physical, typographical, linguistic, historical characteristics.

As I note above, my focus was first on structure. Now that I have a basic workable system in place, I can begin to add complexity. As we speak, my WWP training is introducing me encoding that will help me shift from a visual, presentational display orientation to a deeper, contextual mindset. Having said that, I am starting to think about how this data will be visualized. At this time, I feel I must do research on the potential output of this contextual approach to encoding. I feel there is so much creative protentional, I am very interested in the potential for interdisciplinary research.