

## Changing Personal Memories to Group Memories: Study of a Workshop on the Expression of Personal Memories

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**Abstract.** We have held workshops on the expression of personal memory since 2006. The purpose of the current study is to investigate a workshop on the expression of personal memory. These expressions constitute “photos” and “narrations.” To clarify the relationship between them, we held a mini workshop involving the use of PC software called “Zuzie,” which we developed. There are two kinds of “narrations”: 1.) arranged stories and 2.) memories that are generated and told immediately. It was invented by giving the many viewpoints supported by “Zuzie.” The narrations changed participants’ memories from personal to group.

**Keywords:** personal memories, group memories, expression, photo, narration, community, workshop

### 1 Expression Activities

These days, many people use digital tools. Diaries and photos containing personal memories have also been digitized, and the data is saved on memory cards, hard discs, and servers. However, software versions are constantly being upgraded and data formats change quite rapidly. Thus, we are sometimes unable to view the abovementioned data. How do we preserve these memories? How do we want to view them? What should we do to ensure that the photos and diaries people have left behind as an accumulation of their expressions are preserved? Therefore, our everyday life is much more enriched with these experiences. The goal of this study is to enrich everyday life through activity of expression. The goal may not be achievable using currently available professional tools, so we must determine what kind of framework is necessary.

We have held the expression workshop at community school four times. The purpose of these workshops is to find ways of sharing personal memories; in the workshops, materials such as maps, booklets, or card games were used. These expression styles have been created in a series of workshops. The expression style is discussed and decided by the participants, and they must match their content to the expression style. How

they go about the expression is related to creativity. The components of the expressions mentioned here are “photos” and “narration.” In the mini-workshop was expressed on the sheets. The arranging was made while discussing whether it is a different aspect, who is depicted in the photos, the style of photos, and what meaning you ascribe to those photos. Expression and narration cannot be separated. This was consistently observed in participants’ narrations about memories and expression.

### 2 Expression Workshop

The idea that “memories are recorded” was the theme of this course and it was necessary to understand this in order to participate in the expression workshop (Nagai, 2010, ZuzieWorkshopWebsite, 2010). The purpose of the workshops is to find the framework of the expression of personal memories. The participants were residents in the vicinity of Seijo University. The workshops were held four times since 2006. Each workshop had about 20 participants. They were told that there was no right or wrong method of expression. We organized expression styles into the following categories based on their contents: “map,” “booklet,” “chronology,” and “Japanese card game.” Each of the items in these categories has two things in common: “photos” and “narrations.”

The content of the expression activity is as follows.

The first workshop was held in the spring term of 2006. There were eleven participants. The style of expression activity was the group-based arrangement of cards on geographical map, as shown in Figure 1.



Fig. 1. Spring term 2006

The second workshop was held in the autumn term of 2006. There were seven participants. The style of expression activity was an individual activity involving the arrangement of 8 cards on folding paper, as shown in Figure 2.



Fig. 2. Autumn term 2006

The third workshop was held in the spring term of 2007. There were eight participants. The style of expression activity was a group-based activity where participants prepared cards by indicating their ages and then arranged those cards on solid fiberboard, as shown in Figure 3.



Fig. 3. Spring term 2007

The fourth workshop was held in the spring term of 2008. There were nine participants. The style of

expression activity was individual work involving the preparation of photos and phrase cards. There are some card games that originated in Japan. Participants were instructed to pair photos with phrase cards, as shown in Figure 4.



Fig. 4. Spring term 2008

### 3 Styles and Components of the Expressions

The workshops had two things in common: “photos” and “narrations.” In order to understand how the participants narrated their memories and showed their photos, we organized a mini-workshop using Zuzie that involved arranging photo cards and phrase cards on sheets and the sheet can be increased (Yokokawa, 2010). This purpose of this mini-workshop was to find the relationship between “photos” and “narrations.”



Fig. 5. Mini workshop

The mini-workshop was held on February 21, 2010, and there were five participants. The style of expression activity was group work. Each participant was instructed to bring ten photos for their own theme, as shown Figure 5. In this workshop, “narrations” referred to the memories themselves and the “photos” prompted the “narrations.” Concerning “narrations,” we made two findings. The first was that the participants did not focus on only one element of a photo. The second finding was that there are two kinds of “narration”: 1.) arranged stories and 2.) memories

that are generated and told immediately. The participants narrated to each other, and in doing so they made “group memories.”

#### 4 Arranging Cards to Establish a Viewpoint

In the mini-workshop, everyone began by explaining their photos; subsequently, they upload their photos on Zuzie along with their expressions. This time, they used eight sheets, as given below. Each sheet had the same photos, but a different story could be told by arranging them differently. This is a consequence of approaching the sheets with different viewpoints. There were 8 sheets used at the time. Participants arranged cards on Zuzie sheets. By arranging the cards, the participants established viewpoints. Changing the sheets meant changing the viewpoints. Doing so uses the photos to obtain many different versions of narration.

(a) Who did the memory belong to?

On the first sheet, these images were grouped together who did the memory belong to.

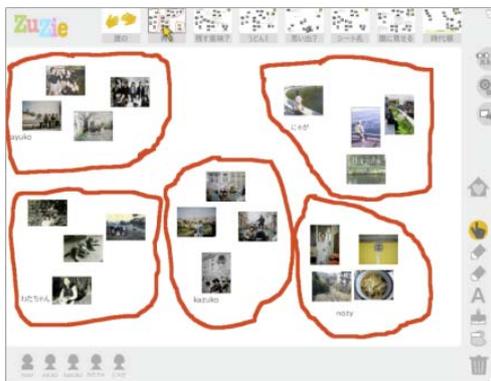


Fig. 6. Who did the memory belong to?

(b) what

There were four kinds of images, “people,” “parents and children,” “animals,” and “things.” The images were grouped together depending on their type.

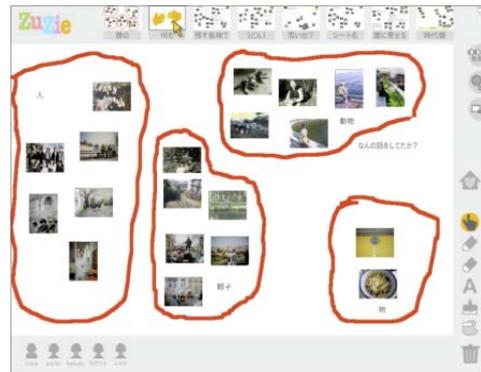


Fig. 7. What

(c) Why do we record?

What was the purpose of recording the events with photos? The photos were expressions of participants’ memories of events; therefore, it is necessary to understand the purpose of wanting to preserve those memories. Personal photos are not normally historically significant like photos in school textbooks. However, we attach a great deal of significance to our personal memories. They enrich our everyday lives, and sometimes personal memories are more interesting than popular fiction.



Fig. 8. Why do we record?

(d) Japanese “Udon” noodles

Next, the participants discussed each photo. They told stories that were not evidenced by the photos.

(e) Personal memories

Then, they changed the sheet and discussed what their “personal memories” meant to them. Some of the photos had not been experienced, that is, some of the memories were false.

(f) No name

The fifth sheet was filled with words, so they picked up a new sheet. The new sheet had no title, but it involved second “personal memories.”

(g) Show whom

The participants were asked to discuss who they would show that day's expression to: "friends," "family," "children," or "colleagues."

(h) Chronology

Finally, the participants laid out all the photos in chronological order.

## 5 Categories of Narration

There were two categories of narration: arranged stories and memories that were generated and told immediately.

### 5.1 Arranged stories: participants want to narrate stories when they choose photos.

(a) Past

- The cat and I: "the cat is my special friend."



Fig.9. The cat and I

(b) Present

- Boat fishing: "I did not experience this scene. However, I know the story."



Fig. 10. Boat fishing

(c) Future

- The Trevi Fountain: "I want to go to Rome with my son."



Fig. 11. The Trevi Fountain

### 5-2. Memories that are told immediately and generated

- Things out of frame: "steps"

S: I recall my father and mother from photos of them walking with their daughter. Because there is no person on the photo.



Fig. 12. Steps

No: We do not personally know your mother. But we are acquainted with who she is.

## 6 Narrating Expressions of Memories from Personal to Group

When the participants chose their photos, they prepared their stories. Each participants told their stories first. Other participants recalled their own separate memories when listening (Fig. 12). Then, they told that next stories. The "narrations" were the memories and the participants created their own "group memories" by sharing. In addition, they shared their experiences with one other (Holstein, 1995). This is most important for the community in order to facilitate the sharing of memories with a group.

In this workshop, changing sheets connected narrations and arranged stories. A changed sheet indicated a changed viewpoint. Moreover, the process of arranging out photos with all the participants implied the sharing of their content. These two points

are important elements. The participants in this course were not previously acquainted; they became friends by narrating their memories. In the workshop, personal memories became group memories through narrations. Making expression of memories have to need the place where interactive sessions of listening to participants' narrations.

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