Therapeutic Implications of using a Monotype Process

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ABSTRACT

Printmaking holds a rich diverse history that can be found throughout many cultures, but it has not been used or studied enough to determine if the printmaking medium has substantial therapeutic benefits in art therapy. This comparative research study was conducted in two-parts and included (a) interviews with therapists who use monotype in their practice and teachers familiar with the medium, and (b) immersion in monotype printmaking with personal art-making. Through interviewing individuals familiar with the printmaking medium, this study was able to elicit first hand experiences and find common themes to help support the premise that monotype printmaking possesses substantial therapeutic benefits. Through a reflective journal that documented personal art-making, the researcher was able to understand how printmaking may be adapted to various settings where space or printmaking materials may be limited. It was found that monotype does offer therapeutic benefits as well as provides the artists and client flexibility in materials and approach. However, several disadvantages were also expressed and discussed.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Printmaking has not been used or studied enough to effectively know if printmaking has substantial therapeutic benefits as an intervention in art therapy. White (2002) explained that printmaking as therapy has not been widely explored because of the association of printmaking being expensive and due to its complicated equipment and processes. However, the printing process of monotype offers advantages that other printmaking processes do not, and may be easily adapted to fit a variety of therapeutic settings. Monotype printmaking, as described by White (2002) was a non-traditional, process oriented, planographic process that offered advantages of other printmaking mediums without the material cost and specialized equipment. It was this researcher’s intention to further explore the monotype printing process and its possible advantages and disadvantages as a therapeutic tool.

Significance of the Problem

Printmaking holds a rich diverse history that can be found throughout many cultures. A speaker for Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art (2011) explained that printmaking has been around since the first caveman put his hand up to a wall and used it to create a stencil. Printmaking throughout the world has seen many movements and shifts, initially used to spread religious images or text, it now has strong roots within the fine arts. Despite this history within the arts, limited research has been conducted within the field of art therapy on the therapeutic use of printmaking and in particular the use of monotype in therapy.
Research Questions

This study asked the question, *How do other therapists use monotype printing in their practice, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of this medium?* In addition, the researcher reflected on her personal art-making with monotype print making, and was guided by the question, *What can I discover about the therapeutic aspects of printmaking if I immerse myself into creating monotype images?*

Basic Assumptions

Basic assumptions of this researcher included that monotype printing can be adapted to fit several different environments, age groups, and populations as well as offer therapeutic benefits to individuals who use it.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the expressive power and benefits of monotype printmaking in art therapy and to identify the possible advantages and disadvantages of incorporating monotype printing processes in art therapy. The results of this study will provide further literature on the therapeutic use of printmaking in art therapy.

Hypothesis

Through the immersion in monotype print making in personal art-making and the analysis of data collected from interviews, the researcher will be able to identify the benefits of using monotype within art therapy as well as draw conclusions on the therapeutic benefits of the entire printmaking medium.

Operational Definitions

**Baren.** Traditional, Japanese, hand-held, disc-shaped pad used for producing a relief print by burnishing the back of the printing paper when it is laid on the inked block.
Collograph. Print made from a collaged block.

Engraving. General term for the act of incising marks, the incised block itself and any prints made from it.

Etching. General term for the process of using a mordant to bite the surface of a printing plate, the etched plate and any prints from it.

Etching needle. Sharp metal tool used for scratching images onto a metal plate for printing by the intaglio process.

Hand-Burnishing. Method of printing a block with a hard, smooth, hand-held implement such as a wooden or metal spoon or baren which is used to apply pressure by rubbing the back of paper laid, face down, on the inked block.

Hand/foot pressure. Method of printing a relief block by applying pressure with hand or foot to transfer and inked impression from block to paper.

Ink. Pigment suspended in a semi-liquid oil-based or water-based medium, prepared to a particular consistency and malleability suitable for printing.

Inking slab. Smooth hard surface used for mixing, spreading, and rolling out ink.

Intaglio print. Imprint produced by a method in which ink is rubbed into the grooves on a printing plate and printing is carried out, on dampened paper, using an etching press to force the dampened paper into the inked grooves of the plate to pick up the impression.

Linocut. A print produced from a linoleum cut.

Matrix. General term for a printer, printing block, or printing plate.

Monotype. An impression made on paper from glass or some equally smooth matrix to which oil or water-based ink/paint has been applied and printed through a press or hand rubbing.
**Printmaking.** Printmaking is the design and production of prints by an artist using processes including, but not limited to, relief, screen, intaglio, and lithography.

**Printing press.** Machine designed to print repeatable impressions.

**Roller/brayer.** Tool used to roll out ink evenly onto a slab and printing plate.

**Stencil.** Template for a design involving cut out shapes from stiff paper, card, or acetate.

**Woodcut.** Print produced from a block of side grain wood or manufactured board.

**Limitations**

This study was limited by a small sample size of only four interviews which were conducted over the phone due to the distance between the researcher and the interview participants. Another limitation was the diversity of the sample of interviews conducted. The researcher interviewed two grade school art teachers and two art therapists. Originally, five interviews were to be conducted including an undergraduate printmaking professor and a graduate printmaking student. However, both declined to participate, which left only four participants to interview.

**Ethical Implications**

Art therapist researchers have an ethical obligation to research participants. According to the American Art Therapy Association (2013), art therapy researchers respect the dignity and protect the welfare of participants in research. Principle 9.3 stated that:

Researchers requesting participants’ involvement in research inform them of all aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to influence willingness to participate. Researchers will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that full and informed consent has been obtained from all participants. (p. 9)

Principle 9.4 stated that “researchers respect participants’ freedom to decline
participation on, or withdraw from, a research study at any time with no negative consequences to their treatment” (p. 9). For the purposes of this study each interviewee was asked to review, sign, and send a consent form to participate in this study (see Appendix A). Each participant was also provided a detailed explanation of the study and its purpose, and had the option to decline involvement or withdraw at any time.

**Justification of Study**

Despite a long history of printmaking within the arts, there was limited research within the field of art therapy on the therapeutic use of printmaking, and in particular the use of monotype in therapy. Significant advantages of using printmaking in therapy have already been identified in the limited literature available on this subject. The researcher intended to further explore the unique qualities that printmaking has to offer as it relates to the field of art therapy. The monotype process was chosen to be the specific process of inquiry because of its accessible nature.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

In a presentation on the history of western printmaking at the Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art (2011), Joseph Velasquez, a printmaking artist, educator, and founder of Drive by Press, explained that around the 15th Century printmaking began taking its fine art form. During this time most images created using printmaking mediums were religious text and were images printed for commercial use. Printmaking processes were developed out of trades, for example, metal smiths and jewelers originated engraving, and woodworkers designed woodcuts. Through experimentation, new ways of printmaking evolved including lithography and screen-printing. Each printmaking process possessed a unique mark, which Velasquez stated “it can drive the vehicle or idea to the place it wants to go” (Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, 2011).

In today’s standards, we are bombarded with multiplying images in newspapers, magazines, and computer screens, and that it can be hard to imagine a world where every image created was unique. Prior to the 15th century images were one of a kind and extremely rare, because most images were created by drawing or painting. Only the rich and churches had the money to own these one of a kind images. The technology of printmaking allowed for a single image to be reproduced over one hundred times by a single matrix of carved wood. The spread of knowledge and ideas expanded expediently. Advancements in science, engineering, and simple pleasures of the home, such as playing cards and devotional images were now accessible to even the poorest members of society (Coos Art Museum & Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 2013).
History of Printmaking Materials.

**Cloth and paper relief.** White (2002) explained that printmaking has a rich history in the Eastern world as well. The earliest printed images have been found in China, where men printed on cloth using relief techniques until paper was invented around 105 AD. This allowed for distribution of knowledge, for example, images carved from stone were transferred to paper which aided the spread of Buddhism over a large geographical area. White (2002) noted that, “in the evolution of thought very few inventions have been as important as the development of the printed word” (Chapter 2, “Relief processes, Relief processes: stamps, woodcuts, para. 6).

Eastern printmaking also influenced the West. Japanese Ukiyo-e prints were introduced to the western world through trade with Japan in 1854, where the unique style of Japanese artists greatly influenced artists in the West (White, 2002). The widespread availability of paper in Europe made printmaking more accessible. Germany and Italy had their first paper mills in the 1390’s, which was around the same time the first woodcuts in Europe were being produced (Coos Art Museum & Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 2013).

**Woodcut Presses.** Woodcuts have been known to have existed since the T’ang period of Northern China around 627-649 AD. Woodcuts during this time were used to spread Buddhist doctrines. Woodblock was established in Europe in the 15th century where it served the church, state, and universities. Stewart (2013) explained that a division of labor was used to create woodcuts, using a designer, block cutter, and printer as different individuals who created one image. The earliest woodcuts were not printed with a press, but the matrix would be inked and stamped onto paper, at times a wooden spoon would be utilized to rub the paper on top of the matrix creating a more uniformed result.
**Lithograph Printing.** Lithography is a planographic printmaking process. Pogue (2012) wrote that the word lithography comes from the Greek words *grapho*, meaning *to write and draw*, and the word *lithos* meant *stone*. Lithography was traditionally printed on finely grained limestone from Bavaria. In 1798, Alois Senefelder, created the first lithograph print, by chemically treating a stone to hold ink, wherever there was a greasy mark the ink was repelled. Pogue (2012) explained that this ushered in revolutionary developments in both commercial and fine art printmaking. Maximilian Jospeh, the King of Bavaria, commissioned Senefelder to write a book on his new method of printing, which spread quickly throughout Europe and made the medium more accessible to others.

**Intaglio Printing.** Intaglio comes from the Italian verb *intagliare*, meaning *to carve*. Intaglio images were made from marks incised into the surface of a metal plate, and ink was forced into these lines of the plate’s surface. The plate, once inked, was carefully wiped, and a sheet of dampened paper was placed over the inked plate and covered with varying thicknesses of felt blankets before it was ran through the press. The printing press put a high amount of pressure onto the plate, which forced the paper into the inked grooves of the plate creating the printed image (Pogue, 2012). There are three types of Intaglio print methods; engraving, drypoint, and etching.

**Engraving.** One of the earliest printing processes used by European artists was engraving (Pogue, 2012). Artists used linear techniques of hatching, cross hatching, or a pattern of dots and flicks by a printmaking tool into metal plates. The artists pushed the sharp tool away from themselves, cutting the metal plate. Pogue (2012) explained that by the end of the 15th century important painters and printmakers had begun to discover the potential of engraving as a
print medium. However, engravings became used primarily for reproducing paintings, sculptures, and book illustrations (Coos Art Museum & Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 2013).

**Drypoint.** This technique was first introduced in the 15th century. The artist used a sharp tool called a needle that raised ridges of metal along side of the line, called burrs. These raised ridges held the ink ready for printing (Pogue, 2012). Unfortunately, these burrs did not hold up when pressed the way engraving or etching lines did. A type of drypoint, Mezzotint, which became popular in the 18th century allowed printmakers to introduce shades of gray into the typically black and white print. Mezzotint allowed printmakers to mimic drawings (Coos Art Museum & Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 2013).

**Etching.** This process became popular in the 17th century and etched lines with acid or other corrosive materials into a metal plate. The artist scratched a line drawing through an acid-resistant coating, which exposed the metal plate underneath. Once the plate was exposed to acid, lines were etched wherever the metal was exposed. Etching allowed for a more natural mark and motion of drawing than engravings, noted Pogue (2012). The development of hard varnish used as ground allowed artists to achieve lines with varying weight and thickness. Etching also allowed the plate to be processed more than once, allowing the artist to deepen selected lines (Pogue, 2012).

**Screen Printing.** Screen was a print process that used a porous woven mesh fabric with a stencil that allowed ink to be pushed through the mesh in open areas and blocked the ink elsewhere. A squeegee or rubber blade was used to force inks through the mesh of the screen, putting the ink onto the paper. Stencils have long been used by many cultures to create repeatable visual images. When screen printing first began, artists used oil based inks and silk for printing. Samuel Simon had the first patent in England for a wooden frame stretched with
silk fabric for the use of printing in 1907 (Pogue, 2012). In the early 1960’s artists, such as Andy Warhol, began using photo stencils. During this time synthetic fabrics were now being used, which offered advantages such as the fabric being able to withstand the harsh chemicals used to remove the photo stencils.

**Monotype Printing.** Monotype was invented in the 17th century by Giovanni Castiglione, but was made popular by the impressionist Manet (White, 2002). White (2002) explained that monotypes have been popular in the United States since the 1980’s due to their ability to provide expressive results and because it was an accessible medium. Stobart (2001) described three simple methods when making monoprints. The first technique was drawing into ink, which was described as the easiest. In this method the artist rolled ink onto the matrix and drew onto the ink layer with anything to make a mark. Then placing the paper over the ink image and rubbing firmly all over with their fist. Once complete, the artist peeled the paper off the matrix to reveal the printed image.

The second technique allowed the artist to have a painterly approach by painting with printing ink onto the matrix. Using brushes or palette knives, the artist painted an image straight onto the matrix. Once the image was to their liking, the artist placed the paper over the image, applied pressure, and pulled the print. The final method was drawing onto the back of the paper, which provided the artist with a unique feathery line. In this process the artist rolled a layer of ink onto the matrix and placed the paper over the ink. The artist then drew onto the back of the paper using any tool or their hand.

White (2002) described a time where she was working in a psychiatric hospital where she was providing art groups on weekends for clients in brief treatment. Clients were mostly adults; however there were often one or two adolescents. After trying several art media she attempted to
introduce monotype prints. White (2002) explained that the printmaking technique reduced resistance, engaged the client’s curiosity for new media, and found that even clients putting in minimal effort yielded results.

The uses of monotype were also discussed by White (2002) as possibly being helpful to clients suffering from anorexia nervosa. White (2002) believed that monotypes can aid clients in working through distortions of body image because working in monotype; images can be produced quickly and can allow for them to rework prints and redraw by rolling new ink onto the plate. White (2002) described a process in which a photograph was placed under Plexiglass and the client would then roll a thin layer of paint over the image to create a reductive monotype and a graphic distortion of the image. The same image could also be manipulated using an additive process. In either process, the client would be able to clearly identify the distortion from the original image.

White (2002) believed that monotypes could also be a valuable process for art therapists who do not have ample time to create their own work. She felt that art therapists should make the time to engage in their own art-making. The art therapist could create several monoprints in one session and allow them to dry. Once dry, the monoprints may be carried around with the therapist, who could then work on small sections by drawing, painting, or coloring into of the already printed image during her spare time. This process was described as a slow and meditative process, similar to knitting but providing more creative self-expression (White, 2002).

**Therapeutic use of Printmaking**

In relating Robert Ault’s three-part understanding of art therapy (i.e., Person, Process, Product) to printmaking, White (2002) described how printmaking may be applied to each. Printmaking had a unique characteristic, in that the artist had the opportunity to produce multiple
images as well as documenting progress. White (2002) stated that “in cases where a product is valuable goal for therapy, printmaking is invaluable” (Chapter 1, Product process and person, para. 2). She also added that this can be applied both in individual and group settings.

Printmaking was also highly tied to process, where each technique had a specific process and approach. White (2002) listed benefits of the process-oriented medium of printmaking. Processes can be divided into simpler steps, training skills are measurable, tasks can be divided among multiple clients that can aid in group development, and repetition with subtle differences can be satisfying and soothing. White (2002) directly related the Person aspect of art therapy to the monotype process. She believed that monotype printing lends itself to creative expression, personal exploration, and self-understanding while allowing containment through the plate which contains the emotion.

**Age appropriate printing activities.** Boriss-Krimsky (1999) believed that printmaking can be used with a variety of ages and populations. The researcher developed a variety of printmaking exercises for the various stages of graphic development that corresponded to stages of developmental capability. These exercises included a wide range of approaches and materials that can be used in a variety of environments, such as therapeutic, educational, and personal settings. Throughout *The Creativity Handbook: A Visual Arts Guide for Parents and Teachers* by Boriss-Krimsky (1999), many monotype activities were discussed for various developmental stages and, its value was that “No matter how the monotype is approached, it is process-oriented and fluid medium that invites play and manipulation” (p. 118).

Printmaking can also be utilized in several ways to address therapeutic goals and issues. Waller (2006) described a case study that involved an art therapy group of chaotic children where she utilized basic printmaking to begin a therapeutic relationship with one of the group’s
members. The young girl requested to do a linocut but because of safety concerns, the therapist and child compromised with an exercise of printing found objects. This printmaking process produced engagement from the child and presented a safer experience during her art-making.

Moon (2010) felt that simple printmaking techniques such as stamping or relief printing can aid children who are initially mistrustful and engage them in art-making. Children may take pleasure in the printmaking process and interest in the materials often leads to deeper engagement and expressive art-making by the child.

**Benefits of printing.** Moon (2010) discussed the therapeutic benefits of utilizing printmaking techniques in therapy. Some of the benefits identified were (a) that the activity can be broken down to step-by-step processes allowing for structure, (b) it was an indirect process that can be liberating because the client may get caught up in the process allowing for excitement when pulling a print, and (c) “allows for flexibility and style of approach, and thus evidence of deficits is minimized in the work produced” (p. 31). Hinz (2009) believed that “making multiple images in a short period also reduces the amount of conscious planning and ego investment in the final crude images, and thus allows for more creative possibilities in the outcome” (p. 174). White (2002) felt that the process of monotype allowed the therapist time to observe and guide their client. She explained that during the act of printing a monotype the image may change during the printing process if the ink moves or smudges, which may be frustrating for the client. However, this affect may add to the therapeutic experience, by the “ideas of sublimation of intense feelings through art enacted when clients are pulling monotypes” (Planographic process, Monotypes: the painterly print, para. 13). Several authors touched on how printmaking and monotype processes can offer various kinesthetic and sensory benefits. For Moon (2010), the kinesthetic engagement can be found in repetitive movements, such as rolling a brayer, rubbing,
or printing a plate. These movements can create a feeling of calm and slowing down. In explaining monotype activities for a variety of age groups Boriss-Krimsky (1999) stated that children should be encouraged to think in different ways on how they can use printing materials such as their hands, vegetables, string, and other simple tools to create an image. Monotype was a non-traditional printmaking process that allowed the user to create images rapidly with painterly marks. White (2002) discussed several benefits to utilizing this process in therapy which included the increased freedom of expression associated with printmaking and the flexibility of using monotype over other print mediums. Benefits included:

- Monotype can be done with or without the use of a press.
- The artist does not need to be skillful to successfully create a print.
- Monotype has a painterly affect which was familiar to most clients.
- The process does not require a lot of materials in comparison to other printmaking processes.
- The artist can add or remove ink easily to change the image they create.

White (2002) believed monoprints allowed clients to visually project from the images they created. Brooke (2004) described the benefits of projective methods as allowing the client to discover unconscious determinants of self-expression that may not be apparent through direct, verbal communication. Therefore using art expression allowed the client an opportunity to explore personal problems without the use or dependency of verbal communication.

White (2002) described one projective approach to monotype, which was called fold-over prints. These prints were created by putting paint or ink on paper then folding the paper in half, rubbing, and opening the paper to reveal the print. White (2002) wrote that these “prints produce a Rorschach-like abstract images, excellent for projection” (Chapter 7, Artistic and clinical
considerations, para. 1). White (2002) felt that this spontaneous approach to printing may help clients to feel a sense of freedom, creativity, and allow them to relax. In addition, White (2002) believed that “non-artists are often surprised at their creativity, where studio trained artists may find it difficult to work without rules and expectations” (Chapter 7, Artistic and clinical considerations, para. 2). In groups, White (2002) explained she often encouraged clients to share their images with one another; however it was important to remind clients that the images they saw in their own work and in the work of others was a projection of their own thoughts and feelings.
CHAPTER III

Methods

This comparative research was conducted in two-parts and included (a) interviews with art therapists who used monotype printing process in their practice and art teachers with experience in teaching monotype to students, and (b) immersion in monotype printmaking with personal art-making.

Interviews

Participants. Two art therapists and two art educators who use monoprinting in their practice were selected for interviews. This sample from different professions and varying levels of ability were selected to provide information on their experiences in utilizing monotype in a therapeutic setting, as well as provide information on their personal experiences with working with the monotype process. Each participant was selected through invitation. All participants were white, female, with a wide age range, educational background, and work experience.

The first art therapist was in her mid thirties with a Bachelor of Arts (BA), Masters in Art Therapy (MAAT), and a Doctorate in Counseling Education Supervision (EdD). The second art therapist interviewed was in her late fifties. She did not offer her educational background, but was a registered art therapist, board certified (ATR-BC) and had been using monotype for about 30 years in her practice. The first art educator had her Master’s in Education and was in her late thirties. The second art educator interviewed was in her late twenties, and had a Bachelors of Fine Arts (BFA).

Procedures for Data Collection. Phone interviews were conducted with each participant on pre-arranged date and time for the convenience of each interviewee. The questions were non-invasive and addressed the use of monotype printing in therapeutic practice.
The consent form (Appendix A) was emailed to each participant prior to the phone interview. The researcher called each participant to verbally explain the consent form and to answer any questions about the study. Once the signed Consent Form was returned to the researcher, an interview time and date was set up, and phone interviews commenced. Five interviews were conducted over the phone. Each interview participant was provided with the questionnaire (Appendix B) prior to the phone interview to allow them time to process and formulate their responses. There was minimal risk to participants because no identifying information was collected. Interviewees were assigned a code which corresponded to the phone interview notes to maintain confidentiality.

**Data Analysis.** During each interview notes were taken and emailed to the participant so that each participant could review their answers to ensure accuracy and provide an option for them to clarify or change their responses. The final responses were then returned via email and analyzed for common themes. Thematic analysis (TA) was the method used to analyze the data collected from the interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as:

A method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set. Through focusing on meaning across a data set, TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of a collective or shared meetings and experiences. (p. 57)

Braun and Clarke (2006) identified six steps for conducting a thematic analysis:

1. Familiarizing oneself with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Hunting for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes

6. Constructing the report

**Personal Art-Making**

**Participant.** In using monotype printing for personal art-making, the researcher immersed herself into the process by creating her own images in her home. The researcher was a white female in her twenties with a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in printmaking. Her experience with printmaking and monotype provided a large knowledge-base of print mediums and techniques. However, most of her print experience had taken place in a studio where she had access to professional printmaking presses and equipment.

**Procedures for Data Collection.** The researcher immersed herself in monotype printing at her personal residence utilizing at home supplies to complete monotype prints. Preceding and concluding the studio and home sessions, the researcher documented her personal experience of the monotype printmaking process including cognitive thoughts, and emotions about the process, and attitude of artwork produced.

**Data Analysis.** The reflection process followed Moustakas’ (1990, pp. 27 - 37) six phases of heuristic inquiry of self-as-researcher. These phases included (a) initial engagement, (b) immersion, (c) incubation, (d) illumination, (e) explication, and (f) creative synthesis. According to Douglass and Moustakas (1985), this type of research has an inherent validity through an authentic self-process, one which was self-directed, self-motivated, and open to spontaneous shifts. These experiences allowed the researcher to gather personal reflections in tangible artworks with reflections on the process of printmaking written in a journal. The data from the journal entries were analyzed using a TA analysis to identify codes and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
Data Collection and Storage

Data was collected through reflective journaling and a portfolio of artwork created during home sessions. The researcher kept her artwork and the personal journal at her residence. Interviews were conducted on the phone and any notes taken were kept secured in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home.
CHAPTER IV
Results of the Study

Interviews

Three over arching themes (see Figure 1) emerged from the interview material and included (a) flexible/adaptable materials and processes, (b) therapeutic benefits, and (c) disadvantages.

Figure 1. Thematic Analysis.

Flexible/Adaptable. Each participant provided many examples and comments regarding monotype’s ability to be flexible and adaptable for the artist/client to overcome barriers that may be presented due to age, environment, group size, or ability. Two additional sub codes emerged from the interview material suggesting monotype was flexible and adaptable both in materials and processes.

Materials. The materials used in monotype printing may also be adapted to individual or group work. One significant advantage to monotype versus other printing methods was that
monotype printing did not require a press. In fact, many of the participants noted that using fingers and hands for applying pressure when printing allowed the client or artist a deeper tactile experience when pulling a print. Monotype was also very affordable in relation to other printmaking processes. Each participant noted that the monotype process could be successful using only basic supplies. One could create a print with simply a flat surface, paint, and paper. Due to this monotype was very accessible and may be adapted to almost any environment. Certainly, other affordable materials which are easily found within a personal residence can be used such as cotton swabs, sponges, or rags to wipe away or apply ink. Using a wooden spoon was often adopted as an at home baren for burnishing a print.

One art therapist explained that she used monotype with clients aged between six years to adult and was constantly adapting the materials of printing to suit the needs of her clients. One of the big factors she was always considering was age restriction. She explained that the younger the clients the less materials she would put out for use to avoid over stimulation. She added that when working with young clients she kept the materials as basic as possible and asked her young clients to simply put ink on the matrix and experiment with pushing it, rolling it, or moving it with a paint brush on the plate. When working with younger clients she also limited the size of the plate.

The art teacher working in an inner city school with many students who exhibit behavioral problems stated that she always considered the working space. She explained that often her students would purposely alter or deface other student’s artwork. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring she had her students used the table top as their printing plates. This allowed students to remain in their seats and be able to feel that their work was safe.
**Process.** Monotype, by nature was a process-oriented art media, however it also had the ability to be adapted to fit the users need or experience level. Each participant noted that monotype was a process that had a variety of approaches that could be utilized to yield successful results for the client/artist, even for the participant who had little to no experience with any art media.

One participant explained that her first experience with monoprinting was during an undergraduate printmaking class, where she was frustrated trying to get a specific image to be successful using a complicated process of printing. In her frustration she decided to try monoprinting. She described the experience as freeing because she had no “right” way to approach the process, she experimented, and was able to focus her current actions of creating, rather than what she believed the image should be.

In monotype clients/students had flexibility and freedom in their approach to creating. They also had the freedom of working very loosely and not adhering to a strict method or process. Monotype may be approached additively by squirting, spreading, rolling, or painting ink or any wet media onto the matrix surface. A subtractive approach may also be taken by rolling or painting a thin layer of ink or wet media over the surface of the matrix and wiping, scratching, or drawing away the ink or by placing the paper over top the inked matrix and drawing over top the paper to create a transfer drawing. Both additive and subtractive approaches may be utilized at the same time to create images. Additionally, unsuccessful images can continuously be worked on by printing another image on top or facilitate experimenting in mixed media by cutting it up for a collage or drawing or painting on the surface once dried. Clients/student did not have to adhere to strict time limits; each individual may work at their own pace, but also have the ability to create several images within one session.
**Therapeutic benefits.** Both the art therapists and grade school art teachers described the therapeutic benefits of monotype printing. All four participants provided examples of how printing facilitated a sense of achievement, personal success, and increased self-esteem when printing. Each participant felt that the monotype process allowed individuals an opportunity to achieve satisfying results regardless of age, ability, or effort, which provided them with a sense of accomplishment after printing. Since this process can be adapted to the strengths of the individual it may also allow the client/student to silence their inner critical voice.

One art therapist added that monoprinting was a relatively unknown process, and the painterly aspect can provide the therapeutic benefits of painting without the pressures of preforming to a created standard of what a painting should look like. When pulling a print there was an element of surprise created because the ink can move and shift while applying pressure to the paper. This created distance between the individual and the end image created, allowing the individual to let go of any protection or control they may feel over performance and put trust in the process.

The art teacher working in the inner city school found that monoprinting allowed students who are typically disruptive or distracted to become focused, centered, and improves behavior in her classroom. She explained that other mediums, such as drawing or collage, are mindlessly done and she sees her students just “going through the motions.” She added that with monotype they were engaged in the process, not focused on other life stressors, and excited for the outcome of their work. The other art teacher noted that monotype provided opportunities for her students to employ problem solving and when they work through an issue and find success, it increased their self-esteem.
Both art therapists discussed that monotype was a successful projective tool because often clients approached it a non-objective way. One art therapist explained that it was helpful to reflect on color, shapes, and patterns. In her practice mono prints were often used as a projective tool that can aid the client to go deeper with the metaphors that emerge from their work. She added that using the metaphor allowed the client to address issues in a non-threatening way because they do not have to talk directly about it. In addition, the other art therapist noted that this medium was able to access unconscious images because the images created were often abstract and expressed moods.

**Disadvantages.** Some significant disadvantages were discussed in the interviews which must be taken into consideration when working in this medium. Each participant noted that monotype had the potential to be very messy, and due to the fluid media may cause regression. Other factors are that this process may take time for set up, creating, printing, and cleaning as well as can take a significant amount of room to work if the individual had a variety of tools. Other hurdles also arose due to the process-oriented nature of monotype. One art teacher explained that for some of her students, it can be difficult for them think in layers. Many of her adolescent students liked to add words or phrases to their work and often become frustrated once they realize the words become reversed once printed.

One art therapist noted that for some clients the step by step process may be difficult and it was always important to be available to help them if they forget any steps. The unpredictability of pulling a print and the altering of the image can also be very frustrating to some, as well as not understanding that images show up in reverse on the paper once printed. The other art therapist reported that the monotype process could also be difficult for trained artists. She described one client of hers that spent one entire session meticulously painting a
garden scene on her printing plate, only to print it and see that all the ink smashed together. She explained that it was difficult for this client to let go of how she wanted the image to be and just experiment with the process.

**Personal Art-Making**

The researcher took part in two approximately one-hour monoprinting sessions in her home; sessions included set up and clean up. Preceding and concluding the printing sessions the researcher documented her process, and any thoughts and feelings in a journal.

**Materials.** Supporting the results of the study that monotype can be adaptable and flexible, the researcher found that it was easy to adapt the monotype printing at home. The majority of the materials used were found in her own residence and only inks and a brayer were purchased. Materials included:

1. Four small tubes of speedball water-based relief ink in black, blue, red, and yellow
2. Reused dry erase board for a matrix and palate to mix/roll ink on
3. Circular mirror used as a matrix
4. Brayer
5. Thick paper
6. Wooden spoon
7. Paint brushes
8. Q-tips
9. Rags

**Process.** The researcher worked in the three simple methods described by Stobart (2001). The subtractive process of drawing into ink rolled onto the matrix (see Figure 2). Once the matrix was rolled out the researcher wiped away ink with a Q-tip and the back of a
paintbrush, laid paper over the image, and rubbed with a wooden spoon. Figure 3 was created

Figure 3. Image B.
using the additive method of painting directly onto the surface of the matrix, and Figure 4 by placing the paper over the inked up matrix and drawing, creating a transfer. 

*Figure 4. Image C.*

Each process allowed for an easy transition by simply wiping the plate clean and starting over or once printed rolling or painting more ink onto the matrix. Each print took varying amounts of time to complete. For example, Figure 1 and Figure 2 took approximately five to ten minutes, whereas Figure 3 took approximately fifteen to twenty minutes due to layering images on top of each other.

The personal artmaking experience supported the accounts of the interviews that monotype printing is flexible in both materials and process. This researcher was able to produce successful prints with limited supplies and access to traditional printmaking materials. Many of the personal reflections documented in the journal describing materials and process were that this researcher did not feel limited in approaches and could manipulate the print to achieve structure in line work or expressive marks through rolling, dabbing, and smearing ink onto the matrix.
Therapeutic benefits. Each print created had its own unique mark and was created through experimentation, allowing the process to drive the formation of the image. Just as one art teacher described her students as focused and their inner critical voices silenced, the researcher also felt the same focus and ease. Monotype printing allowed a sense of freedom to experiment on how to apply or to take away the ink, which created excitement to see the resulting image printed.

Evidence of therapeutic benefits of problem solving, mental focus, and meditative nature of printmaking were described in this researcher’s reflective journal. Problem solving was indicated through discussion in her reflective journal on how she mediated between her intent of the final image and adapting to fit the limitations of printing in layers. Mental focus and meditation was heightened by allowing focus on each step of the process. This allowed the researcher to experience a calming of critical thoughts and contemplate the formation of the image throughout each state of the process.

Disadvantages. The researcher did not find any of the disadvantages in her monotype printmaking at home that were expressed by the art therapists and art teachers interviewed in this study. However, these disadvantages may present themselves as obstacles for the less trained printmaker or for those sharing working space with others.

Discussion

The data from the interviews and personal monotype printing by the researcher indicated that this type of printing process was flexible and adaptable, had therapeutic benefits as well as some disadvantages.
Flexible/Adaptable

Both the art therapists and art educators highlighted the versatility of monotype process and techniques as well as the materials that can be used for printmaking. Furthermore, this researcher also noted her own experiences in being able to adapt the process to fit the confines of her personal residence where limited space and supplies were available. This result was supported by the limited literature on this subject that highlighted a variety of simple tools and materials (e.g., hands, vegetables, string, leaves) that can be used in this process (Boriss-Krimsk, 1999). Monotype may also be used with children and adults, with individuals or in groups (Desmet & Anderson, 2001). In the classroom or in clinical groups, the willingness to participate, ability, and skill level varies in any given group. Since monotype was a step by step printing process, giving a step in the process to individuals may help engage them and promote group participation (White, 2002). The process of making multiple images in a short space of time also allowed for creative possibilities to emerge without pre-planning (Hinz, 2009). The repetitive process of rolling, rubbing, or printing may help to calm and soothe through the kinesthetic engagement (Moon, 2010).

Therapeutic Benefits

One of the benefits of monotype printing noted in this study was its ability to help clients/students to let go of control and to trust the process. Monotype allowed for the projection of unconscious thoughts and feelings, providing an opportunity to explore personal problems without the need for verbal communication (Brooke, 2004). White (2002) explained that with monotype process tended to be less guarded and the indirectness of printing allowed clients to distance themselves from their work. This separation may allow clients to project their thoughts and feelings onto their artwork, helping to problem-solve issues through the process of printing.
Furthermore, as the image smudges and alters during the printing process, it may change the image from the original intent, which White described as both frustrating and illuminating, and adds to the therapeutic opportunity. Moon (2002) believed that art therapists should make use of client’s metaphors as much as possible, both in artistic process and guiding exploration of artwork.

Other advantages of using monotype in therapy were that it was a relatively unknown process that helped to decrease the stress of performing to a standard. Monotype also subscribed to Robert Ault’s three-part understanding of art therapy (i.e., Person, Process, Product) in that printmaking had unique characteristics which included the ability to produce multiple images, encouraged creative expression, personal exploration, and self-understanding (White, 2002). The product was an integral part of printmaking and that pulling successful prints gave clients/students a sense of achievement while improving self-esteem. This finding was a new concept which has not been replicated in the limited literature found on therapeutic printmaking.

White (2002) described monotype printing in therapy as a process oriented approach that allowed great flexibility and freedom of painting, but also provided containment and structure because work must be completed within the confines of the plate. However, White (2002) added that it was important for the therapist to:

Understand the process and variations to be able to guide with confidence. If you understand each of the ways to create a monotype, you will have choice to present to a client if he or she is having trouble with the process or needs containment or expansion.

(Chapter 7, Monotypes : the painterly print, para. 7)
Disadvantages

The results from this study indicated that monotype may also present disadvantages for both clients/students including messiness, taking up space, unpredictability, and possible regression. White (2002) believed that art therapists should familiarize and educate themselves with the monotype process to be adequately prepared to adapt the process and educate their clients about the disadvantages of the medium. She felt that each of these disadvantages might be overcome with patience and knowledge of the medium. White (2002) also explained that for studio-trained artists, monotype can be difficult because they may be asked to create without expectations or rules.

Although, these aspects of monotype printing may present as disadvantages for some clients they may also present therapeutic opportunities as well. For example, the requirement to follow steps of the process as well as think in layers to achieve a successful print may facilitate increased mental focus. Opportunities in tolerating frustration and employing problem solving skills may result from a client experiencing dissatisfaction in a resulting image or complexity of the process.

Limitations

The results of this study were limited to art therapists and art educators who utilized monotype with their clients and students. The anecdotal comments provided information on their perceptions of how monotype affected their client/student and their own experiences of printing process. This limited sample did not give voice to those who have experienced monotype in therapy, but who were not invited to participate in this study. A larger and more diverse sample of participants may yield different insights into the therapeutic benefits of the monotype process.
Recommendations

Further research is recommended to increase understanding of the benefits and disadvantages of monotype printing as well as how the process can be adapted as an art therapy intervention in various environments, with culturally diverse populations, and with different diagnoses. Research is also needed to replicate this study’s finding that pulling successful prints gave clients/students a sense of achievement while improving self-esteem. Pre- and post-tests would be required to establish cause and effect. Utilizing the results from this study and creating a monotype printmaking group may help to further explore the expressive qualities and potential therapeutic benefits of printmaking in art therapy.

Conclusion

This limited study indicated advantages of monotype printmaking because of its flexibility and adaptability in materials and process. The study also identified therapeutic benefits and disadvantages to the process. Art therapists may easily and successfully implement monotype into their own practices by personal experimentation because it is an inexpensive and uncomplicated process. The data in this study may help to support the potential benefits of monotype in art therapy and highlighted the possible disadvantages of this medium. Further research is recommended.
References


APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to research the therapeutic benefits and disadvantages of using printmaking, and specifically monotype printmaking. Each participant was selected through invite. This study is a partial requirement of the class, AR591 – Research, for Jessica Shanaberger, a student majoring in Art Therapy at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.

There is minimal risk involved because no identifying information will be collected from participants. Interviewees will be assigned a code which will correspond to the phone interview notes to maintain confidentiality. Phone interviews will be conducted with each participant on pre-arranged date and time to allow convenience for each interviewee. The questions are non-invasive and address the use of monotype printing in therapeutic practice. Only the researcher will have access to the completed interview and will be maintained for a period of three years after publication of the results.

The participants have the right to decline participation in the survey by not returning the form. In addition, participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, by notifying the researcher.

This study was approved by the Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Human Subjects Institutional Review Board on October 2nd, 2014.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher, the researcher’s supervisor, or the chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

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My signature below indicates that I am 18 years of age or older, I have been informed about this study, I consent to participate, and I have received a copy of this consent form.

__________________________________________  __________________________
Signature                                      Date

__________________________________________  __________________________
Co-Researcher Signature                        Date
Interview Questions

1. Please describe your experience with monotype printing, including your work and educational experience.
2. How long have you been working in this medium?
3. What drew you to this process?
4. Is monotype used for personal self-expression?
5. In your experience how have you adapted monotype to suit your needs or the needs of your clients/students? (i.e., environment, age, abilities).
6. What inherent advantages to you believe this process allows the artists?
7. What inherent disadvantages do you believe this process may exhibit for the artist?
8. From your experiences, what are some examples of the therapeutic use of monotype printing?