

5/22/66

RELEASE: 78-66

GUAM PROFESSOR WILL INTRODUCE "MODERN MATH" IN TRUST TERRITORY

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, May 26 - - - A College of Guam mathematics teacher and his wife have volunteered to pioneer in the introduction of "modern mathematics" to teachers of the Trust Territory.

Assistant Professor of Mathematics T. H. Odum and Mrs. Odum, who is a teacher in the Guam elementary school system, will go to Truk shortly after June 1 to take part in the Truk District summer institute for elementary teachers, which will also feature social studies and English in its curriculum.

Other members of the mathematics faculty of the institute will be Missano Petrus and James J. Sullivan.

The arrangement whereby the Odums will teach, without pay, was the outgrowth of a conversation several months ago with Peter Hill, education administrator for Truk District.

The objectives of the mathematics program at Truk will be to convince teachers that they can read and understand the "modern mathematics" as it is presented in the text they will use next year -- "Seeing Through Mathematics."

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In this text, much use is made of colored pictures, which are intended to give the students visual images by which they can establish the relationship of different objects to each other. This teaching method will soon begin to replace the teacher-prepared lesson sheets, in the opinion of Trust Territory education officials.

"But the teachers themselves will first have to learn to read and understand the text material, and this will be a specific goal for the teachers of English," Professor Odum said recently.

"I know from personal contacts," he continued, "that many teachers are unable to read and understand completely the teachers' manuals which accompany the students' texts; many of the words and examples are beyond the teachers' knowledge. We shall spend the summer learning how to pace the students' progress through the student text and how to fit these pages week by week to the teachers' manual. Teachers attending the institute will also learn some new English as well as some 'new math'."

"Modern mathematics", which is rapidly being introduced in U. S. schools is, according to Trust Territory education officials, the "same old mathematics" with the concepts of set theory, probability, and number theory thrown in, and taught to elementary school children. It is a system whereby students below high school level can grasp the centuries old concepts of mathematics. The need for the system came in with the "Sputnik Age", which gave impetus to the teaching of mathematics. Several national committees spent much time in the 1950's experimenting with teaching set theory and other concepts to younger children, and it has been established that the average

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child not only can learn "higher" mathematics, but enjoys learning it much more than his parents enjoyed learning, by rote, the multiplication tables and formulas which largely comprise the subject of mathematics. (In "new math", the old tables and formulas remain, but are taught with considerably more imagination.)

Mr. Odum has a master's degree in education from Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and a bachelor of science degree from Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas. He was head of the Hardin-Simmons physics department (1957-62) before joining the College of Guam, and attended Tufts University, University of California and Temple University on National Science Foundation Fellowships.

Mrs. Odum also attended Hardin-Simmons, and Texas Tech at Lubbock.

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