

Franklyn Sanchez

GP – Person/Contribution Assignment

Choice: Emil Post



“Perhaps the greatest service the present account could render would stem from its stressing of its final conclusion that mathematical thinking is, and must be, essentially creative.” (Emil Post).

Emil Post was born in Poland on February 11th, 1887. At the time Poland was controlled by the Russian empire so Post and his family fled to New York City at the age of eight. Another interesting event that occurred to Post at the age of eight was that he lost an entire arm. In his golden days, Post attended the College of the City of New York where he studied to become a well-known mathematician and logician. Shortly after he began his post graduate degree at Columbia university where he is famously known for his studies on the Principia Mathematica. One unfortunate known detail about Post is that throughout his career he suffered from manic depression.

One of his initial achievements was proving the propositional calculus of the book using a truth table method that he produced independently of the creation of truth table themselves. After Columbia, Post became well known for the structure theory of recursively enumerable sets, the introduction of Turing degrees in 1944, and lastly the Post correspondence problem. Post also solved the incompleteness and unsolvable theorems that made Gödel and Turing famous. Unfortunately, Post didn't publish his work before they did because he felt as if the proof was not highlighted enough to be accepted by the scientific community at the time. Gödel and Turing taking credit for the work Post put together for a large part of his career was likely to be the reason for his depression. Emil Post died shortly after on April 21st, 1954 due to his depression but his work is still used today.