

ZMATH 2012b.00585

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Epistemology of the relative numbers. (Epistemologia dos números relativos.)

Bol. GEPEM, No. 57, 65-102 (2010).

Summary: To affirm that the 'rule of signs' (- by $-=+$, - by $+=-$, ...) does not present any difficulty to understand, it took more than 1500 years. A detailed study of texts of the main authors - from Diophantus to the present day - has allowed the identification of some of the obstacles that opposed the understanding of negative numbers. We intend, through various experiences, to search if the difficulties experienced by Euler and d'Alembert were the same of the young students of nowadays.

Classification: F40 C30 A30

Keywords: integers; epistemological obstacle; history of mathematics