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A REVIEW OF CURRENT IDEAS ON THE TEACHING OF MATHEMATICS¹

THE subject of elementary mathematics has been the last to respond to improved pedagogical methods. Recently, however, there has been a general awakening of interest in methods of mathematical instruction which seems to be universal in its scope, and to have originated simultaneously in France, Germany, England and the United States. Although the discussions have been widely varied, there is practical unanimity on the point that mathematical instruction should be less formal and more practical, and should constitute simply an extension of the ordinary experience of the child.

Although the ideas recently expressed are almost wholly deductions from experience, they seem, for the most part, to have a scientific basis. They recognize, namely, that the child learns as the race has learned, by proceeding from concrete and familiar facts to the general laws underlying all

¹A summary of reports on special topics, assigned in connection with a course for teachers on the history and teaching of mathematics, given by Professor S. E. Slocum at the University of Cincinnati, 1907-8. The class, part of whose work is here presented, was composed as follows: Charles Otterman, A.B., professor of mathematics, Woodward High School, Cincinnati, Ohio; Albert Schwartz, A.B., principal Linwood School and principal East Night High School, Cincinnati, Ohio; Benjamin H. Siehl, A.B., teacher eighth grade, Morgan School, Cincinnati, Ohio; Charles H. Siehl, A.B., teacher eighth grade, Garfield School, Cincinnati, Ohio; Jesse K. Dunn, principal Highlands School, Cincinnati, Ohio; F. L. Williams, A.M., principal William Grant High School, Covington, Kentucky; Howard Hollenbach, B.Sc., instructor in science, Lockland High School, Lockland, Ohio.