

MONTESSORI SYSTEM FOUNDER DIES

From Our Special Representative
LONDON, May 7

Dr. Maria Montessori, the 81-year-old Italian woman who 50 years ago opened the window on young child education, died last night in Holland.

Dr. Montessori, whose name is preserved in many schools throughout the world, once said that children in ordinary schools were like butterflies transfixed with a pin—and began to bring the butterflies to life.

She introduced small, comfortable desks and chairs and low windows, and pioneered the theory that children can learn as much by play as by work.

While some of her kindergarten reforms are still subject to dispute—no fairy stories, for example—her basic principles are widely incorporated in kindergarten methods everywhere.

Dr. Montessori, who never married, was the first woman to take a medical degree in Rome at a time when women were debarred from attending lectures at the university.

In 1908 the first Children's House—an all-day school for infants—was opened in Milan, and by 1914 Montessori schools had been established in Austria, Germany and Spain.

A Montessori Research Institute was founded at Barcelona in 1917, and in 1919 Dr. Montessori founded a college bearing her name at Hampstead, in London. By this time Montessori Societies had been started in many countries.

In 1922 Dr. Montessori was appointed Government inspector of schools in Italy. In 1934 her schools were closed by Mussolini.

Dr. Montessori went to Barcelona, from which she was rescued by a British cruiser during the Spanish Civil War.

In 1939 she went to Madras. On Italy entering the war, she was interned.

Dr. Montessori, who held training courses in London every two years after 1919 and in alternate years in other parts of the world, published numerous books in 13 languages.