

3. Do you think third places differ from country to country? Why might some third places in your country be less appealing elsewhere?
- B. Choose one question and write a paragraph in response. Look back at your Quick Write on page 131 as you think about what you learned.

READING 2

A Path to Road Safety with No Signposts



You are going to read a profile from *The New York Times* about Dutch traffic engineer Hans Monderman. Although he died in 2008, Monderman's ideas about cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists sharing roads are still popular today. Use the article to gather information and ideas for your Unit Assignment.

PREVIEW THE READING

- A. **PREVIEW** Read the title, subheadings, and caption in the article. What do you think Monderman did to make roads safer? Make three predictions.
- B. **QUICK WRITE** How do you think urban planners can make towns and cities friendly for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians? Write for 5–10 minutes in response. Remember to use this section for your Unit Assignment.
- C. **VOCABULARY** Work with a partner to find these words in the reading. Circle clues in the text that help you understand the meaning of each word. Then use a dictionary to define any unknown words.

accommodate (v.)

anticipate (v.)

appealing (adj.)

concede (v.)

counterintuitive (adj.)

criteria (n.)

division (n.)

fatal (adj.)

negotiate (v.)

proponent (n.)

regulated (adj.)

reinforce (v.)

Oxford 3000™ words



- » A. Read the article and gather information on what makes a public place appealing.

A Path to Road Safety with No Signposts

By Sarah Lyall

- 1 DRACHTEN, The Netherlands. "I want to take you on a walk," said Hans Monderman, abruptly stopping his car and striding—hatless, and nearly hairless—into the freezing rain.



Pedestrians, bicycles, and cars all share this intersection in Drachten without the need for traffic lights or road signs.

- 2 Like a naturalist conducting a tour of the jungle, he led the way to a busy intersection in the center of town, where several odd things immediately became clear. Not only was it virtually naked, stripped of all lights, signs, and road markings, but there was no **division** between road and sidewalk. It was, basically, a bare brick square.

¹ **anarchical**: without order

² **rhetorically**: asked only to make a statement or to produce an effect rather than to get an answer

- 3 But in spite of the apparently **anarchical**¹ layout, the traffic, a steady stream of trucks, cars, buses, motorcycles, bicycles, and pedestrians, moved along fluidly and easily, as if directed by an invisible conductor. When Mr. Monderman, a traffic engineer and the intersection's proud designer, deliberately failed to check for oncoming traffic before crossing the street, the drivers slowed for him. No one honked or shouted rude words out of the window.

- 4 "Who has the right of way?" he asked rhetorically.² "I don't care. People here have to find their own way, **negotiate** for themselves, use their own brains."

- 5 Used by some 20,000 drivers a day, the intersection is part of a road-design revolution pioneered by the 59-year-old Mr. Monderman. His work in Friesland, the district in northern Holland that takes in Drachten, is increasingly seen as the way of the future in Europe.

- 6 His philosophy is simple, if **counterintuitive**.

- 7 To make communities safer and more **appealing**, Mr. Monderman argues, you should first remove the traditional paraphernalia³ of their roads—the traffic lights and road signs; the center lines separating lanes from one another; even the speed bumps, speed-limit signs, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian crossings. In his view, it is only when the road is made more dangerous, when drivers stop looking at signs and start looking at other people, that driving becomes safer.

³ **paraphernalia**: a large number of different objects, especially the equipment that you need for a particular activity

8 "All those signs are saying to cars, "This is your space, and we have organized your behavior so that as long as you behave this way, nothing can happen to you," Mr. Monderman said. "That is the wrong story."

9 The Drachten intersection is an example of the concept of "shared space," a street where cars and pedestrians are equal, and the design tells the driver what to do.

10 "It's a moving away from **regulated** traffic toward space which, by the way it's designed and is **anticipated**," said Ben Hamilton-Baillie, a British specialist in urban design and movement and a **proponent** of many of the same concepts.

11 Highways, where the car is naturally king, are part of the "traffic world" and another matter altogether. In Mr. Monderman's view, shared-space schemes thrive only in conjunction with well-organized, well-regulated highway systems.

Social Space

12 Mr. Monderman is a man on a mission. On a daylong automotive tour of Friesland, he pointed out places he had improved, including a town where he ripped out the sidewalks, signs, and crossings and put in brick paving on the central shopping street. An elderly woman crossed slowly in front of him.

13 "This is social space, so when Grandma is coming, you stop, because that's what normal, courteous human beings do," he said.

14 Planners and curious journalists are increasingly making pilgrimages⁴ to meet Mr. Monderman, considered one of the field's great innovators, although until a few years ago he was virtually unknown outside Holland. Mr. Hamilton-Baillie, whose writings have helped

⁴ pilgrimage: a journey to a place that is connected with someone or something that you admire

⁵ wallaby: an Australian animal like a small kangaroo

bring Mr. Monderman's work to wider attention, remembers with fondness his own first visit.

15 Mr. Monderman drove him to a small country road with cows in every direction. Their presence was unnecessarily **reinforced** by a large traffic sign with a picture of a cow on it.

16 "He said: 'What do you expect to find here? Wallabies⁵?' Mr. Hamilton-Baillie recalled. "They're treating you like you're a complete idiot, and if people treat you like a complete idiot, you'll act like one.' Essentially, what it means is a transfer of responsibility to the individual and the community."

17 Dressed in a beige jacket and patterned shirt, with scruffy facial hair and a stocky build, Mr. Monderman has the appearance of a football hooligan⁶ but the temperament of an engineer, which indeed he trained to be. He was working as a civil engineer building highways in the 1970s when the Dutch government, alarmed at a sharp increase in traffic accidents, set up a network of traffic safety offices. Mr. Monderman was appointed Friesland's traffic safety officer.

18 In residential communities, Mr. Monderman began narrowing the roads and putting in design features like trees and flowers, red brick paving stones, and even fountains to discourage people from speeding. This principle is now known as psychological traffic calming, where behavior follows design.

19 He made his first nervous foray into⁷ shared space in a small village whose residents were upset at its being used as a daily thoroughfare for 6,000 speeding cars. When he took away the signs, lights, and sidewalks, people drove more carefully. Within two weeks, speeds on the road had dropped by more than half.

⁶ hooligan: someone who behaves in an extremely noisy way
⁷ make a foray into: to attempt to become involved in (a new activity)



3 Much—if not most—of what we know about the natural world lies completely outside of science textbooks, libraries, and databases, existing only in unwritten languages in people's memories. It is only one generation away from extinction and always in jeopardy of not being passed on. This immense knowledge base remains largely unexplored and uncataloged. We can only hope to access it if the people who possess and nurture it can be encouraged to continue to do so.

4 If people feel their knowledge is worth keeping, they will keep it. If they are told, or come to believe, that it is useless in the modern world, they may well **abandon** it. Traditional knowledge is not always easily transferred from small, endangered languages to large, global ones. How can that be true if any idea is expressible in any language? Couldn't Solomon Islanders talk about the behavior patterns of fish in English just as easily as in Marovo, their native language? I argue that when small communities abandon their languages and switch to English or Spanish, there is also massive disruption of the transfer of traditional knowledge across generations. This arises in part from the way knowledge is packaged in a particular language.

5 Consider Western !Xoon, a small language of Namibia (the exclamation mark is a click sound). In !Xoon, clouds are called "rain houses." By learning the word for *cloud*, a !Xoon-speaking child automatically gets (for free) the extra information that clouds contain and are the source of rain. An English child learning the word *cloud* gets no information about rain and has to learn on her own that rain comes from clouds.

6 Languages package and structure knowledge in particular ways. You cannot merely **substitute** labels or names from another language and hold onto all of the implicit⁴, hidden knowledge that resides in a taxonomy, or naming system. Still, each language and indigenous people is unique, and language **shift** takes place at different speeds and under very different conditions. Can we then predict how much traditional knowledge will successfully be transferred and how much will be lost?

7 Some scientists have tried to do just that. The Bari language (1,500–2,500 speakers) of Venezuela was studied by linguists who asked how much knowledge of the plant world was being lost and how much retained. The Bari live in a close relationship with the rain forest and have learned to use many of its plants for food, material goods, medicine, and construction of houses. One scientist found that the loss of Bari traditional knowledge corresponded with decreasing use of forest resources and a shift from the traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle, along with a shift to speaking Spanish. His conservative estimate of the rate of knowledge loss should be a **wake-up call** to all: "I estimate that the real loss of ethnobotanical⁵ knowledge from one generation to the next may be on the order of 40 to 60 percent." (Lizarralde 2001).

8 This is a dire⁶ **scenario**: Bari people who have limited connection with the forest have lost up to 45 percent of traditional plant names. Similar patterns of knowledge erosion⁷ may be observed among indigenous peoples all around the world as they undergo a cultural shift away from traditional lifestyles and languages.

⁴ implicit: suggested without being directly expressed

⁵ ethnobotanical: describing customs and beliefs about plants and agriculture held by a group of people

⁶ dire: very serious, terrible

⁷ erosion: the process of gradually destroying or weakening something over a period of time

