



## Border Crossing

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### What is it?

In a literal sense, border crossing relates to movement across the geographical and physical borders that define our world. In a metaphorical sense, to attempt to border cross is to be aware of and proactive in transcending boundaries that involve categories of difference that separate us. In this respect, we all have borders in our minds delineating “us,” constituting those who are similar, and “them,” comprised of the Others, who are different. Such borders may pertain to race, ethnicity, language, culture, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, religion, ability, or many other social classifications. Border crossing means being willing to attempt to understand Otherness on its own terms. Through the process and experience of border crossing, interconnectivity and the creation of new cultures, identities, and perspectives, become possible.

### Who uses the concept?

The literal concept of border crossing is used by scholars in fields focusing on human society such as demography and human geography. Those working with the metaphorical meaning are drawn from fields including sociology, education, anthropology, cultural studies, and applied linguistics.

### Fit with intercultural dialogue?

Border crossing in both senses described provides a rich and fruitful invitation for

intercultural interaction and collaboration. As for its metaphorical meaning, border crossing is fundamental to intercultural dialogue. Borders are inherent wherever people come together. In this case, the concept of border crossing does not always mean it is possible to perfectly understand Otherness, but rather, attempts to border cross through dialogue open productive avenues for understanding, exploration, and transformation.

### What work remains?

The invitation to attempt to border cross is a simple yet compelling suggestion, but one that has rarely been used as an entry into the processes of intercultural learning, intercultural communication, or intercultural dialogue. In a world beset by conflict and inequality, the concept of border crossing encourages further investigation of how boundaries can be challenged, negotiated, and re-mapped between individuals and communities, for the benefit of all.

### Resources

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Spinsters/Aunt Lute.
- Giroux, H. (2005). *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education* (2nd ed). New York, NY: Routledge.