

**Introduction:**

The bias blind spot, a term first coined by Emily Pronin, Daniel Lin, and Lee Ross (2002) at Stanford University, is when an individual fails to recognize their own biases and how they impact their perceptions and judgments. This activity engages with this concept by first asking participants to perform a selective attention test, created by Dr. Daniel Simons, Professor of Psychology at University of Illinois, to see if they notice a gorilla that appears on the screen as they are focusing on one aspect of a video. Then, they will watch a clip that describes a social experiment facilitated by CBS This Morning co-host Tony Dokoupil, where he showed Republicans and Democrats the exact same clip of a confrontation between police and protestors and asked them who they believed was the aggressor. Participants will discuss this clip, along with the selective attention test, using the concept of the bias blind spot and reflect on how they might check their own bias blind spots in the future.

**Facilitator Note:**

If you utilize the participant instructions, do not share the document with participants prior to watching the Invisible Gorilla video, as it will prime them for what they might miss (the gorilla).

**Objectives:**

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Define the concept of the bias blind spot.
2. Identify how the bias blind spot affects people's perceptions and judgments.
3. Consider how to check their own blind spots in the future.

**Time:**

30 minutes.

**Group Size:**

Entire Group.

**Materials:**

A computer/tablet and projector; Check Your Bias Blind Spot Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#) – do not share with participants until you've watched the Invisible Gorilla video); The following videos (in [Links](#)):

- [Dr. Daniel Simons' selective attention test video: Invisible Gorilla, available on YouTube](#)
- ["We're So Freaking Polarized": See How Americans with Opposing Views Interpret the Same Situation" from CBS This Morning](#)

**Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:**

- Minimization
- Acceptance

## AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

### Cultural Self-Awareness

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

### Openness

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

## Activity Instructions:

1. Show participants the selective attention test video. Ensure participants understand that they should count the number of times that a person with a white shirt passes the ball.
2. After watching the video, pass out the Participant Instructions and ask them to raise their hand if they saw the gorilla walk through the group.
3. Show them the video again and instruct them to watch it as they would any other video, so those who did not see the gorilla can witness it walking through. Then, ask the following questions:
  - If you didn't notice the gorilla when we first watched this video, why do you think you missed it? Conversely, if you did notice the gorilla, why do you think it caught your attention?
  - What does this test reveal about how we perceive the world?
4. Then, show the video from *CBS This Morning* and ask them the following questions:
  - What was the main idea/argument presented in this news clip?
  - What is a bias blind spot? How does it apply to the social experiment presented in this video?
  - How does the bias blind spot relate to the selective attention test? How does selective attention relate to bias?
  - What are some other issues, besides the protests, where someone's bias blind spot may affect how they see or judge the situation?
  - How can you use the information that you learned in this lesson to help you check and consider your own bias blind spot in the future?