effects can be reduced merely by reminding participants that they might be biased. Another strategy involves actively encouraging participants to see the evidence from the other side’s viewpoint. This approach, termed the consider-the-opposite strategy, assumes that it’s not enough to simply tell participants they should be unbiased. Instead, participants need to be given a particular strategy for overcoming their potential biases.

Lord and colleagues (1984) tested these two corrective strategies in a replication of the C. G. Lord, Ross, and Lepper (1979) study on capital punishment. There were three experimental conditions. Some participants were in the control condition and, just as in the original study, no correction instructions were provided. Other participants were in the be-unbiased condition; these participants received the following instructions prior to reading the capital punishment essays:

We would like you to be as objective and unbiased as possible in evaluating the studies you read. You might consider yourself to be in the same role as a judge or juror asked to weigh all of the evidence in a fair and impartial manner.

A final group of participants was in the consider-the-opposite condition; these participants received the following instructions prior to reading the capital punishment essays:

Ask yourself at each step whether you would have made the same high or low evaluation had exactly the same study produced results on the other side of the issue.

The data displayed in Figure 6.6 show that urging people to be fair and impartial did not reduce the assimilation bias. Instead, the assimilation bias was eliminated only