

What Do We Know About the Dissemination of Information on Pedagogy?: 2008, 2010, and 2011



July 2012

Department of Research and Development[†]

The National Science Foundation-funded study cited here examines the dissemination patterns of the American Sociological Association's (ASA) online peer-reviewed digital library known as the Teaching Resource and Innovative Library in Sociology (TRAILS). By comparing TRAILS adopters to users of ASA's prior paper-based Teaching Resource Center (TRC) syllabi-sets, the study asks whether there are TRAILS adopters who were not syllabi-set users, whether the characteristics of the users changed, and how the new technology spread. The study investigates whether we will see changes in adoption patterns and in the network of producers of teaching and learning materials one or two years after the launching of the new technology. In collecting data for this project, we relied on unobtrusive methods and secondary data. The primary source of data is the ASA membership database, which includes information on members' demographic characteristics, including gender and education; institutional characteristics of members' employers; participation in ASA activities; and purchase of materials and other services. We conducted two sets of multivariate regression analyses to investigate the significant characteristics of those who purchased TRC materials in 2008 and later, the significant characteristics of those who subscribed to TRAILS in 2010 and in 2011.

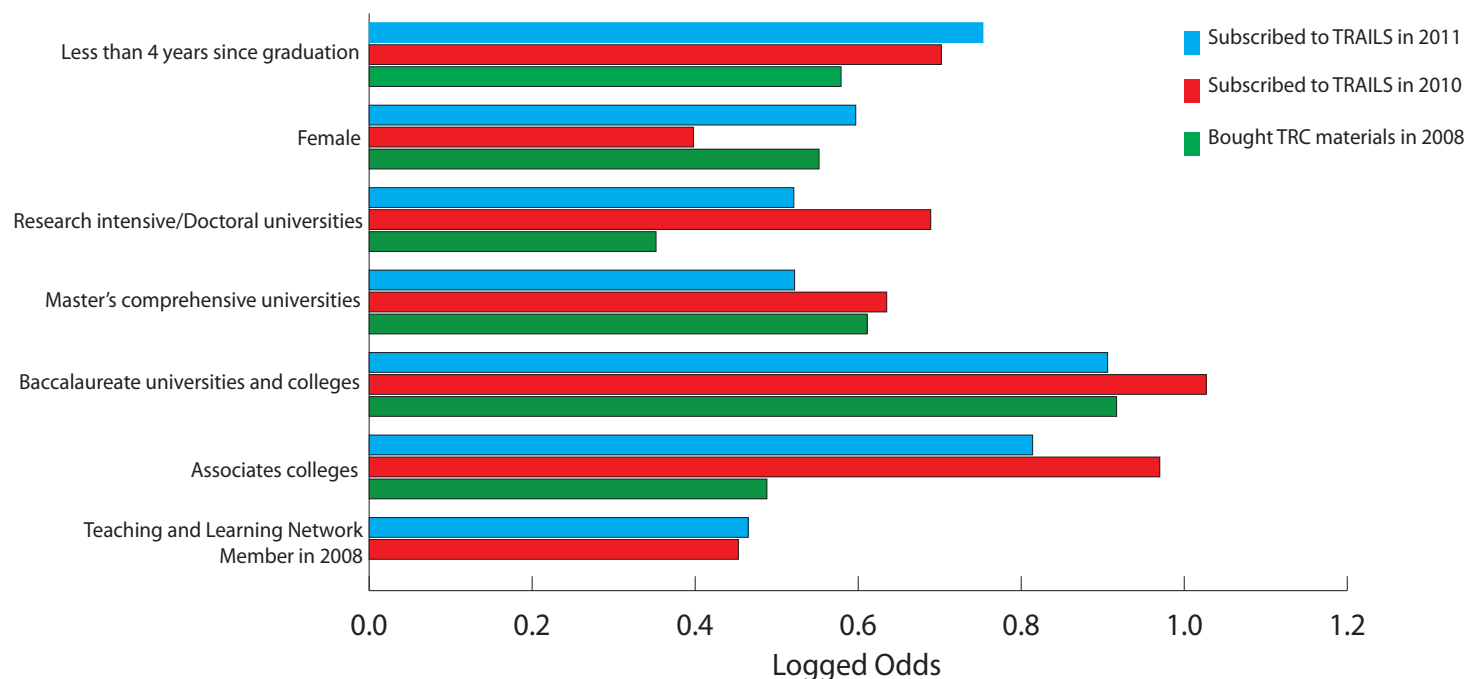
TECHNOLOGY ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH TO BROADEN ADOPTION OF INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

The results of the first regression analysis show that characteristics of TRAILS subscribers in both 2010 and 2011 are strikingly similar to the characteristics of users of the paper-based materials in 2008. In all three regression models, women, early career faculty, and faculty from non-research universities were more likely to use teaching and learning materials than their colleagues irrespective of whether these materials were printed or in digital format. The most extreme differences are between faculty from research extensive universities and faculty from baccalaureate-only schools. In 2008, faculty from baccalaureate institutions were 2.5 times more likely to buy TRC materials than the former, holding other variables constant. In 2010, the difference was 2.8 times, which then decreased to 2.5 times again in 2011 (see Figure 1).

We speculate that information about TRAILS must be traveling through the sociology teaching and learning network. Faculty who participated in the network by contributing and using teaching and learning knowledge are more likely to become TRAILS users in 2010 and 2011.

[†]This brief is part of an ongoing study conducted by Roberta Spalter-Roth, PhD and Olga Mayorova, PhD, of the ASA Department of Research and Development, and Jean Shin, PhD, of the ASA Minority Affairs Program.

Figure 1. Users of the Teaching and Learning Materials Have Similar Characteristics Before and After the Digital Library's Launch: Results from the Logistic Regressions



Note: Shown are the statistically significant coefficients from logistic regressions on teaching materials use by sociology faculty in 2008, 2010, and 2011. For full models see Table 1.

Source: American Sociological Association, Department of Research and Development, 2012.

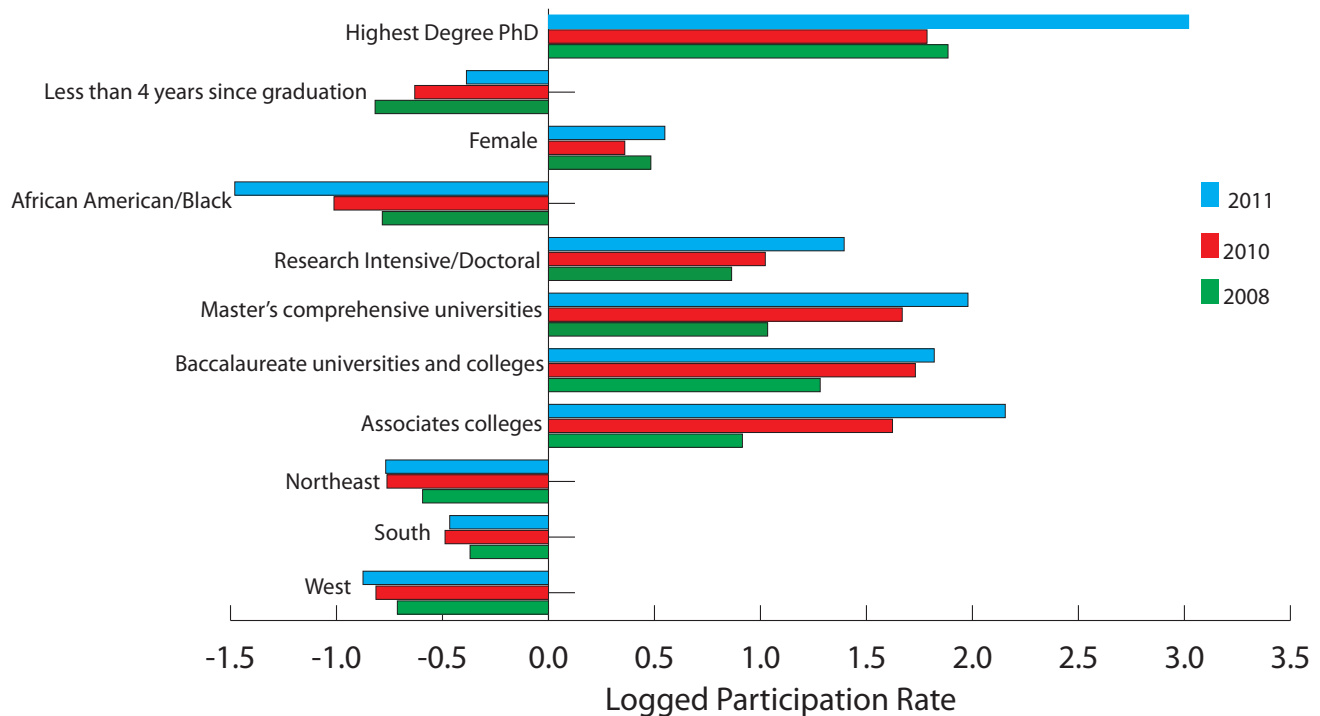
THE DIGITAL LIBRARY DID NOT ATTRACT NEW TYPES OF FACULTY TO THE NETWORK OF PRODUCERS OF INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

Faculty who are white women with many years of teaching experience from the teaching-oriented schools in the Midwest are more likely to become the leaders of the sociology teaching and learning network than other faculty in all three years (2008, 2010, and in 2011). This is despite the fact that new individuals joined this informal leadership group. The differences in the rates of participation in the production of teaching and learning knowledge[†] between faculty from research extensive universities and faculty from other kinds of schools increased dramatically from 2008 to 2011. This means even fewer faculty members from research extensive schools are engaged in the network leadership that influence pedagogy. Also, African American faculty have a lower rate of participation in the production of teaching and learning knowledge in 2011 than in 2008 and 2010 (see Figure 2).

These findings suggest that the new technology alone will not diffuse beyond a homogeneous network of faculty members and institutions with the similar characteristics, at least in the first several years of its existence. In the next phase of this study we will examine whether strate-

[†]Teaching and learning production activities include service on the editorial board of Teaching Sociology journal, reviewing for it and publishing articles in it, serving on the ASA's Teaching and Learning section's committees, being a member of the Department Resource Group, presenting research or organizing a workshop on undergraduate teaching and learning at the ASA's annual meeting, participating in the ASA's undergraduate education task forces, contributing materials to or serving as area editor for TRC syllabi sets or TRAILS.

Figure 2. Leaders of the Teaching and Learning Network Have Similar Characteristics Before and After the Digital Library's Launch: Results from the Logistic Regressions



Note: Shown are the statistically significant coefficients from negative binomial regressions on the number of teaching and learning production activities in which sociology faculty participated in 2008, 2010, 2011. For full models see Table 2.

Source: American Sociological Association, Department of Research and Development, 2012.

gic social interventions increase participation beyond teaching and learning network members and their departmental colleagues. We are particularly interested in learning what interventions could increase adoption beyond the institutions currently in the network of subscribers. For example, what interventions might lead to collaborative production of teaching and learning materials between faculty at research and at teaching schools.

Table 1. Comparing TRC Buyers to TRAILS Subscribers: Logged Odds of Using ASA-Sponsored Teaching and Learning Materials in 2008, 2010, and 2011 for Sociology Faculty.

	Purchasing TRC Materials in 2008		Subscribing to TRAILS in 2010		Subscribing to TRAILS in 2011	
Variables	Coefficients	Robust SE	Coefficients	Robust SE	Coefficients	Robust SE
Highest degree Ph.D.	-0.371 [#]	0.213	0.217	0.274	0.193	0.215
Professional age (compared to 7 or more years since graduation):						
Less than 4 years	0.579***	0.136	0.702***	0.148	0.753***	0.126
4 to 6 years	0.016	0.167	0.239	0.180	0.212	0.144
Female	0.552***	0.115	0.398***	0.128	0.597***	0.107
Race/ethnicity (compared to whites)						
African American/black	-0.415	0.264	-0.193	0.276	-0.241	0.228
Asian American/Asian	-0.504 [#]	0.285	-0.222	0.289	-0.214	0.234
Hispanic/Latino(a)	-0.123	0.273	-0.009	0.312	0.132	0.225
Other race/ethnicity	-0.275	0.467	-0.296	0.500	-0.245	0.354
Type of institution (compared to research I/research extensive institutions):						
Research intensive/ doctoral	0.352*	0.169	0.689***	0.186	0.521***	0.152
Master's	0.611***	0.152	0.635***	0.180	0.522***	0.145
Baccalaureate	0.917***	0.171	1.027***	0.197	0.906***	0.160
Associate	0.488*	0.246	0.970***	0.277	0.814***	0.223
Special focus/tribal/not classified	0.823	0.530	1.036*	0.513	0.560	0.473
Historically Black College/University	0.431	0.450	-0.429	0.628	-0.116	0.446
Institution's region (compared to Midwest):						
Northeast	-0.170	0.148	-0.087	0.162	-0.296*	0.136
South	-0.163	0.155	-0.182	0.166	-0.162	0.135
West	-0.124	0.165	-0.214	0.192	-0.213	0.151
Teaching and learning network member in 2008	-	-	0.453***	0.050	0.465***	0.047
Constant	-2.937***	0.266	-3.998***	0.320	-3.483***	0.255
Number of cases	5,445		5,234		5,310	
Wald chi-square	103.1***		222.5***		284.8***	
Log pseudolikelihood	-1287.8		-1089.7		-1471.6	

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<.05 (2-tailed test); # p <0.05 (1-tailed test).

Note: Control for missing race/ethnicity is included in the models but not shown. Robust estimates.

Source: American Sociological Association, Department of Research and Development, 2012.

Table 2. Participation in the Production of Teaching and Learning Knowledge: Logged Participation Rates from the Negative Binomial Regressions on the Total Number of Teaching and Learning Activities in Which Sociology Faculty Participated in 2008, 2010, and 2011.

	Number of Production Activities					
	2008		2010		2011	
	Coefficients	Robust SE	Coefficients	Robust SE	Coefficients	Robust SE
Highest degree Ph.D.	1.885***	0.475	1.786**	0.701	3.020***	0.790
Professional degree (compared to seven or more years since graduation):						
Less than 4 years	-0.818***	0.188	-0.631**	0.216	-0.387#	0.205
4 to 6 years	-0.311	0.167	-0.206	0.199	0.052	0.216
Female	0.483***	0.114	0.360*	0.148	0.549***	0.162
Race/ethnicity (compared to whites):						
African American/black	-0.784**	0.254	-1.012#	0.528	-1.480***	0.426
Asian American/Asian	-0.386	0.300	0.012	0.301	0.041	0.342
Hispanic/Latino(a)	-0.429	0.302	-0.589	0.402	-0.329	0.354
Other race/ethnicity	-0.944	0.582	-0.732	0.537	-1.243	0.764
Type of institution (compared to Research I/research extensive):						
Research intensive/doctoral	0.864***	0.161	1.023***	0.220	1.395***	0.256
Master's	1.034***	0.158	1.669***	0.213	1.979***	0.241
Baccalaureate	1.282***	0.176	1.731***	0.223	1.820***	0.279
Associate	0.915**	0.289	1.623***	0.427	2.155***	0.389
Special focus/tribal/not classified	0.624	0.740	0.663	0.999	0.294	1.063
Historically Black College/University	-1.196#	0.709	0.114	0.524	-0.284	0.547
Institution's region (compared to Midwest):						
Northeast	-0.594***	0.145	-0.762***	0.187	-0.768***	0.200
South	-0.370*	0.150	-0.488**	0.187	-0.466*	0.207
West	-0.713***	0.166	-0.814***	0.216	-0.875***	0.243
Constant	-4.484***	0.509	-5.121***	0.750	-6.869***	0.829
Number of cases	5,445		5,234		5,310	
Wald chi-square	172.8***		135.5***		142.0***	
Log pseudolikelihood	-1621.4		-1070.9		-957.8	

*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05 (2-tailed test); # p <0.05 (1-tailed test).

Note: Control for missing race/ethnicity is included in the models but not shown. Robust estimates.

Source: American Sociological Association, Department of Research and Development, 2012.

The following are selected research briefs and reports produced by the ASA's Department of Research and Development for dissemination in a variety of venues and concerning topics of of interest to the discipline and profession. These and all research briefs are located at www.asanet.org/research/briefs_and_articles.cfm. You will need Adobe Reader to view our PDFs.

Title	Format	Year
Mothers in Pursuit of Ideal Academic Careers	PDF	2012
Research about Minorities in Sociology: Surveys, Datasets, and Measurement	PPT	2012
Two Years of Lost Purchasing Power: 2011-2012 Faculty Brief for Sociology and Other Social Science Disciplines	PDF	2012
The Effects of New Technology on the Growth of a Teaching and Learning Network	PDF	2011
The Impact of Cross Race Mentoring for "Ideal" and "Alternative" PhD Careers in Sociology	PDF	2011
Sociology Master's Graduates Join the Workforce	PDF	2011
Are Masters Programs Closing? What Makes for Success in Staying Open?	PDF	2011
A Decade of Change: ASA Membership From 2000 - 2010	PDF	2011
Networks and the Diffusion of Cutting-Edge Teaching and Learning Knowledge in Sociology	PDF	2010
The Gap in Faculty Pay Between Private and Public Institutions: Smaller in Sociology Than in Other Social Sciences	PDF	2010
Still a Down Market: Findings from the 2009/2010 Job Bank Survey	PDF	2010
From Programs to Careers: Continuing to Pay Attention to the Master's Degree in Sociology	PDF	2010
Teaching Alone? Sociology Faculty and the Availability of Social Network	PDF	2010
Mixed Success: Four Years of Experiences of 2005 Sociology Graduates	PDF	2010
Down Market? Findings from the 2008 ASA Job Bank Study	PDF	2009
Paying Attention to the Master's Degree in Sociology	PDF	2009
What's Happening in Your Department With Assessment?	PDF	2009
Idealists v. Careerists: Graduate School Choices of Sociology Majors	PDF	2009
What's Happening in Your Department: Who's Teaching and How Much?	PDF	2009
What Can I Do With a Masters Degree in Sociology? The Department in Context	PDF	2009
Decreasing the Leak from the Sociology Pipeline: Social and Cultural Capital to Enhance the Post-Baccalaureate Sociology Career	PDF	2008
PhD's at Mid-Career: Satisfaction with Work and Family	PDF	2008
Pathways to Job Satisfaction: What happened to the Class of 2005?	PDF	2008
How Does Our Membership Grow? Indicators of Change by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity by, Degree Type, 2001-2007	PDF	2008
What are they Doing With a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology?	PDF	2007
The Health of Sociology: Statistical Fact Sheets, 2007	PDF	2007
Race and Ethnicity in the Sociology Pipeline	PDF	2007
Beyond the Ivory Tower: Professionalism, Skills Match, and Job Satisfaction in Sociology	PPT	2007

American Sociological Association
Department of Research & Development
www.asanet.org
research@asanet.org

