



Resource Acceptance Criteria

When reviewing teaching and learning resources that are submitted for publication in TRAILS, area editors will consider the following criteria:

1. Does the resource address relevant, significant sociological content? Is the resource innovative? That is, does it represent a new approach to addressing sociological content or is it a significant and unique variation of a common approach to teaching? (TRAILS welcomes adaptations of TRAILS resources and modifications of common teaching techniques; proper citation of original work is expected.)
2. Does the pedagogical approach reflect best practices as supported by the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) theory and literature?¹
3. Are there clearly stated student learning goals/objectives? The most helpful student learning objectives (SLOs) are brief, specific, and answer the question “What new knowledge, ability, or attitude will students gain as a result of this resource?” Authors may find it useful to refer to a model such as [Bloom’s classification](#) of learning objectives when formulating SLOs. Many helpful resources for developing goals/objectives with specific action verbs are readily available online.
4. Are there clearly stated assessments that provide evidence of learning related to the resource’s stated goals?² The most helpful assessments are brief, specific, and answer the question “How will students demonstrate this new knowledge, ability, or attitude?”

¹ The TRAILS editorial team draws on research based best practices at the college level as articulated in multidisciplinary frameworks for teaching effectiveness such as those summarized in McKinney’s [“A Small Sampling of What We Know About Learning...”](#) For best practices in teaching sociology, please see the most recent report from the ASA Task force on [Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major](#). Authors are also encouraged to cite relevant articles from the journal *Teaching Sociology* and teaching strategies published in TRAILS.

² The word “assessment” is used here in the broadest sense, and could include things as simple as a show of hands in response to a carefully worded question or as complex as a semester-long project in a capstone course. By providing goals for their resources, authors help other users understand the purpose of the resource. By providing assessments related to those goals, authors help other users gather evidence concerning the effectiveness of that resource within the users’ institutional contexts.

5. Is there alignment across learning goals/objectives, readings and tasks, and assessments? Does the pedagogical approach accomplish the stated objectives and do the assessments evaluate the appropriate knowledge, ability, or attitude?
6. Is there sufficient description and supporting documentation to allow others to easily use the resource? That is, are instructions sufficient and complete? TRAILS resource should:
 - a. Describe the specific steps instructors will take before, during, and after your activity, assignment, lecture, etc. Step-by-step instructions may be included in a document uploaded with your submission. When creating instructions, describe *what* you do, *when* you do it, and *why* in order to help other instructors successfully implement your learning activity. The content of instructions will vary but may include: detailed descriptions for how to prepare the activity, necessary set-up processes, step-by-step guidance for facilitating activities, concepts or readings that should be covered concurrently or in advance, and adequate instructions for students completing the activity. The following TRAILS publications model different ways of writing up instructions for activities, assignments, etc.:
 - Rena Zito's [Crime over Time](#) assignment
 - Colby King's [Race to the Bottom](#) activity and lecture
 - Nik Janos' [Infographics](#) assignment
 - Stephanie Medley-Rath's [Objects from Everyday Life](#) discussion activity
 - b. Provide sufficient information for assessing student learning Rubrics, discussion questions, exam questions, and essay prompts can be included in order to help TRAILS users see how student learning can be assessed. If available, it may be appropriate to include sample student work or ideal responses to assessments. For example, the instructions for a discussion activity might include ideal/typical student responses to prompts and follow up questions so that instructors can assess learning during discussion.
 - c. Include "Usage Notes", which provide additional context for users (e.g. type of institution, typical student characteristics, classroom size, honors section, etc). Authors should indicate where, when and how their resource could best be used, how the resource might be adapted for different classrooms and according to different abilities, as well as to share tips or warnings about possible pitfalls.
7. Is the resource well written, well organized, and well presented?