Organizational scholars have long been interested in why new practices spread, yet their focus on “successful” diffusions that reach a broad swath of the population obscures important mechanisms. In instances of limited diffusion – when a practice diffuses only partly through a population – classification processes are invoked: actors may signal their alignment with one camp or another, and labels emerge to distinguish adopters and non-adopters. This paper extends this idea to professional classification in academic science, focusing on three methods that partly diffused through the sociological community: Correspondence Analysis; Qualitative Comparative Analysis; and Sequence Analysis. Qualitative data reveal how the choice to adopt a new method can act as a signal to one’s professional community. Quantitative data on publications allow us to assess how organization- and actor-level characteristics that proxy different approaches to professional classification influence methodological adoption decisions. We find patterns consistent with our predictions: Scholars having a somewhat protected professional status – at top universities, men, and those with intra-organizational careers – are more likely to adopt new methods. Scholars’ professional view of themselves also shapes this process, as self-identified methodologists are more likely to adopt overall and interdisciplinary researchers adopt from other disciplines more quickly. Additionally, senior scholars are more likely to adopt early on, but junior scholars are more likely to adopt overall, perhaps because the potential rewards balance out the risks. Together, our findings contribute to research on limited diffusion and the organization of science, and have implications for the management of knowledge-based organizations and science policy.