

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan-Dearborn
School of Education

Karen A. Thomas-Brown, assistant professor of education, School of Education, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of education, with tenure, School of Education.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2005	University of the West Indies at Mona, Geography, Jamaica
B.A.	1998	University of the West Indies at Mona, Geography, Jamaica
Diploma in Teaching	1994	Mico Teacher's College, Kingston, Jamaica

Professional Record:

2006 – present	Assistant Professor, University of Michigan-Dearborn
----------------	------------------------------------------------------

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Thomas-Brown is rated excellent in teaching. Since joining the School of Education in 2006, Professor Thomas-Brown has taught two of the three required undergraduate courses in elementary social studies, the related multicultural course and two required graduate level courses in educational research. The format for instruction included face to face, online and hybrid. Professor Thomas-Brown implements effective instructional practices into her courses through the integration of technology and service learning. Course development included a doctoral level course in educational research and a field experience course in social studies education. Professor Thomas-Brown and the courses she teaches are consistently highly rated by UM-Dearborn students and are typically well above the school's mean ratings. Her student evaluations and peer reviews of her teaching clearly support a judgment of excellence in teaching. They characterize her teaching as well organized, aimed at high expectations, and designed to engender active student participation. They also indicate not only her deep concern for students and their learning, but also her ability to engage and support students in relevant and meaningful learning opportunities.

Research: Professor Thomas-Brown is rated excellent in research. She earned a doctorate in geography from the University of the West Indies and did graduate work in England. The dominant themes in her research are the impact of globalization, neoliberalism, and localized forces on the operations and transformations of less developed countries. Several articles demonstrate her expertise in diversity issues and her success in promoting geography to wider audiences. Her current scholarship focuses on human geography, specifically, with an emphasis on the cultural components of human interactions and education. Her publication record reflects a steady stream of scholarship and includes articles published (or in-press) in eight refereed journals and one book chapter (in-press). Professor Thomas-Brown has presented her research at numerous national/international geography conferences, and many of her papers were published in conference proceedings. Professor Thomas-Brown embodies the teacher-scholar model by incorporating her research and background into her social studies and multicultural courses. Recognizing the importance of geographic literacy and technology in today's classrooms, Professor Thomas-Brown is currently utilizing her field experiences in classrooms as a resource

for her scholarly work. External review letters from experts in both geography and social studies education reflect positively on the interdisciplinary nature of her scholarship. These letters of review and Professor Thomas-Brown's outstanding record of publication clearly indicate her promise for continued contributions to the field and support a judgment of excellence in scholarship.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- Thomas-Brown, K. (2011). Teaching for geographic literacy: Our afterschool geography club. *The Social Studies*, 102, 181-189.
- Taylor, J. & Thomas-Brown, K. (2011). Beating the odds: Social studies education in inner-city Detroit. *Teaching History*, 36 (1), 22-27.
- Thomas-Brown, K., Brunvand, S., Luera, G., Hentrel, B., Barlow, L., & Wood, L. (2011). Breaking down the ivory tower: Creating a school/university partnership where everyone benefits. *Scholarly Partnerships Edu*, 5(2), Article 2.
- Thomas-Brown, K. (2010). Using "When the Levees Broke/Teaching the Levees" to teach middle school students about empathy and social justice. *Social Studies Research and Practice*, 5(2), 76-90.
- Thomas-Brown, K. (2009). Arab-American and Muslim-American diversity in a Dearborn public high school. *The Journal of Multiculturalism in Education*, 5(1). Retrieved from <http://www.multiculturaljournal.com/volumes/5/1/#thomas-brown>.
- Thomas-Brown, K. (2008). Gender and the teaching of geography in selected Jamaican high schools: The extent to which a causal relationship exists. *Journal of Education and Development in the Caribbean*, 10(2), 24-49.

Service: Professor Karen Thomas-Brown is rated excellent in service. She has provided outstanding service to the School of Education, the campus, the profession and the wider community. Service to the School of Education has included membership on major SOE committees such as the Curriculum, Dean's Search, Professional Standards, Elementary Standards and the Social Studies State of Michigan Program Review. Professor Thomas-Brown has extended her service to the campus community by serving as SOE Liaison to the Mardigian Library, member of the Difference Makers Selection Committee and mentor in the Women's Resource Center. In addition, she was chosen as an academic service learning fellow. Professor Thomas-Brown has been a reviewer for professional journals and for the State of Michigan Elementary and Social Studies Programs. In addition, she is a member of the editorial board for *Research in Geographic Education*. Currently, Professor Thomas-Brown also serves on the prestigious National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Standing Committee for Geography. Service to the wider community includes developing and leading the MacArthur University Academy after school Geography Club and presenting several professional development sessions at local school districts. All of these committees required significant time and contributions at an extraordinary level for an assistant professor.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "She has made important contributions to social studies teaching and learning in middle and high school students, multicultural education, and geography. She has proven that she reaches teachers in the field of social studies education with her papers in *Social Studies Research and Practice* and *The Social Studies*."

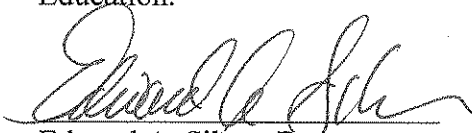
Reviewer B: “Her later work on education is impressive in several ways. First, she is dealing with important topics. Second, her research represents a deep and time consuming involvement in schools. Last, her recent articles build on her previous interview strategies, but include an increasing use of data.”

Reviewer C: “Dr. Thomas-Brown has a very diverse set of research topics... These topics are, of course, connected and also indicate the melding of Dr. Thomas-Brown’s training as a geographer with her current position as a faculty member in social studies and multicultural education.”

Reviewer D: “Dr. Thomas Brown has demonstrated the ability to carry out meaningful research and it is the experience with research methodologies and the desire to continue as a scholar that will result in future publications.”

Reviewer E: “I find Dr. Thomas Brown’s scholarship to be very significant. She investigates important questions related to gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and social justice within geography and social studies education. She has clearly devoted attention to designing and implementing research with theoretical and methodological substance while also maintaining a concern for the practical considerations of educators.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Thomas-Brown is a valued contributor to the School of Education through her excellent teaching, scholarship and service. Supported by high ratings of students and peers, her teaching is an exemplar for student engagement in meaningful learning opportunities both within the classroom and the community. Her excellent scholarship addresses significant social issues and bridges the gap between research and practice. She uses her professional knowledge within her service activities to the community which in turn further enhance both her scholarship and teaching. Professor Thomas-Brown has made continued service contributions to the school, university, profession and community. We are very pleased to recommend, with strong support of the School of Education Executive Committee, Karen A. Thomas-Brown for promotion to associate professor of education, with tenure, School of Education.



Edward A. Silver, Dean
School of Education



Daniel Little, Chancellor
University of Michigan-Dearborn

May 2012