

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan – Flint  
College of Arts, Sciences and Education  
Department of Education

Suzanne M. Knezek, associate professor of education, with tenure, Department Education, College of Arts, Sciences and Education, is recommended for promotion to professor of education, with tenure, Department Education, College of Arts, Sciences and Education.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D. 2007 Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI  
M.A. 1999 Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI  
B.S. 1988 Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Professional Record:

2013-Present	Associate Professor (with tenure), Department of Education, University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan
2007-2013	Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan
2006-2007	Lecturer cum Assistant Professor of Education, Department of Education, University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan
2000-2006	Graduate Research and Teaching Assistant, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Knezek has successfully taught 25 distinct courses. She has been responsible for the development of nearly all literacy courses. These courses range from foundational introductions through the doctoral level. Teaching includes ongoing, individualized mentorship of students at all levels. Professor Knezek has designed, delivered, and continually improved highly effective programs for educators.

Professor Knezek's teaching philosophy is grounded in critical theory, emphasizing that literacy skills can provide or deny access to power. She advocates for a constructivist approach where teachers and students are continual learners. Professor Knezek emphasizes real-world application of education theories. Her courses prepare future educators to integrate theory into practice. She skillfully models pedagogical practices that she aspires for her students to demonstrate in their own teaching. Her approach to prioritizing inclusion and the celebration of systematically minoritized voices in instructional materials is impressive. The approach is essential in shaping an inclusive academic environment. The student evaluations indicate particularly strong performance in areas related to teaching quality, course content, preparedness and respectful treatment of students.

Professor Knezek has played a pivotal role in assessment, accreditation and program development. She was instrumental in creating program assessments and leading NCATE reports which received national recognition for the Literacy MA program. Her thoughtful analyses, attention to detail and collaborative nature ensured adaptation to Michigan's new certification requirements. Notably, this work was done during periods of leadership transition and organizational structure change. Professor Knezek has an exceptional teaching record that includes innovative, inclusive pedagogical approaches. She has made significant contributions to assessment, accreditation and program development.

Research: Since earning tenure, Professor Knezek has produced multiple publications. These include four peer reviewed journal articles, a book chapter and an edited book. Professor Knezek's scholarly

focus is innovative. Her work, particularly in exploring the intersection of identity, diversity, and literature, is crucial for improving the ways in which literature is utilized in education. Notably her co-edited book, Using Diverse Nonfiction Children's Books in K-8 Classrooms, was published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). The broad reach of this book highlights Professor Knezek's commitment to making scholarly research accessible and applicable. In addition to producing publications, her thoughtful collaborations bridge diverse areas of study with literacy education. She has solidified her reputation as a thought leader and innovator in her field. Professor Knezek's scholarly contributions have established her as a leading figure in her field. Her work, widely recognized, is innovative and of high quality.

#### Recent and Significant Scholarly Activity:

Crisp, T., Knezek, S.M., and Gardner, R. P. (Eds.) (2021). Using diverse nonfiction children's books in k-8 classrooms. NCTE.

Knezek, S.M., Gardner, R., and Shaw, L. (Spring 2019). Diverse children's poetry in the university classroom: Exploring voice, culture, and identity. *Journal of Children's Literature (Online)*. e1-e6.

Gardner, R., Knezek, S.M., and Crisp, T. (2021). *Introduction: Selective traditions, K-8 classrooms, and teachers' choice of literature*. NCTE.

Service: Professor Knezek has a strong record of service across various levels. This work embodies her belief that service is integral to her roles as teacher, scholar and community member. At the department level, she has been responsible for oversight of the Masters in Literacy program. This is a considerable time commitment that included course scheduling, hiring and mentoring faculty, academic advising as well as recruitment. At the unit level, Professor Knezek has served on multiple committees. In particular, she has chaired Honors and Awards, Curriculum and Student Review Committees. She has served multiple terms as a member of the SEHS Executive Committee. During this time, her work was instrumental in developing unit level governance documents. Notably, she often served as representative for the Social Work program. Professor Knezek's record of service extends to the university level where she has been elected to serve on the Economic Status of the Faculty Committee, the Scholarships, Awards and Special Events Committee, the Faculty Grievance Committee, as well the Chancellor's Search Committee.

Professor Knezek has demonstrated substantial impact of her service beyond the university. In the community, Professor Knezek was the director of the UM-Flint Reading Center for a decade. The center offers literacy resources to local children and their families. This includes a camp and parent education sessions. At the state level, Professor Knezek has served in multiple roles related to Michigan's Elementary Education standards. She served as a reviewer for Grade Band Teacher Preparation Institution applications for elementary certification programs.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): "I believe that Dr. Knezek has submitted compelling combinations of quantity, quality, and pace of her scholarly activity."

Reviewer (B): "Through collaborative research projects resulting in high-quality publications, Dr. Knezek addresses gaps in the literature as she challenges dominant perspectives and ideologies around topics such as gender and voice."

Reviewer (C): "In the current climate of increased censorship and book banning, Dr. Knezek's work is timely, relevant, and critical."

Reviewer (D): "Her scholarship builds on the contributions of highly recognized scholars in the field, and she has become recognized in her areas of expertise, in collaboration with front runners in her field."

Reviewer (E): “It is evident that Dr. Knezek has a passion for the topic of diversity in children’s literature, in particular non-fiction books, which has been the focus of her professional and research interests, especially since she earned tenure and promotion in 2013. This is an important topic, given the current political climate in some states which targets children’s books focused on diverse populations.”

Reviewer (F): “Dr. Knezek is highly regarded among her peers in the field of literacy education. She is a recognized voice at both the state and national level.”

Reviewer (G): “The oldest and most prestigious organization in literacy education is the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). I identify NCTE here because much of Dr. Knezek’s writing appears in NCTE’s publications, and, as such, her work should be considered representative of current national thought and intellectual movement in literacy education.”

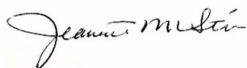
Reviewer (H): “Her research on early childhood classroom libraries availability and accessibility on multicultural texts was the first published work of its kind, setting up standards within the childhood literacy field.”

Reviewer (I): “Dr. Knezek has a well-articulated and fully developed scholarly agenda, which is consistent over time, and has evolved and grown as she has become established and recognized in the field.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Knezek has exceptional contributions in teaching, scholarship and service. Her record of teaching effectiveness is distinguished by innovative and inclusive approaches. Her scholarly activities include publications that have broad impact. The service record is further evidence of Professor Knezek’s excellence. With the full, enthusiastic support of the CASE executive committee, I recommend Suzanne M. Knezek for promotion to professor of education, with tenure, Department of Education, College of Arts, Sciences and Education.

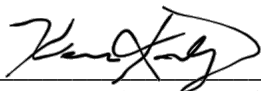
RECOMMENDED BY:



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Jeannette Stein, Interim Dean  
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED BY:



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Yener Kandogan, Interim Dean  
School of Management and Interim  
Provost and Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs



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Donna Kay Fry, Interim Chancellor  
University of Michigan-Flint