



University of the Virgin Islands

Dr. James Maddirala, Director,  
Creative Leadership for Innovation and Change, Ph.D. Program  
invites you to the Public

# Dissertation *Defense* for

Felicita Richards

**Tuesday, April 23, 2024, 4:00 PM AST**

Topic:

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**Join Via ZOOM**

<https://uvi-edu.zoom.us/j/91877831593?pwd=RHUvckdrdk1zY3JHdWtmSogQNnZzQTog>

Meeting ID: 918 7783 1593

Passcode: 477485

**TOPIC:**

“Exploring Creative and Innovative Strategies to Engage Gifted and Talented Students in the Learning Process: A Case Study of One Public School District in the U.S. Virgin Islands”

# ABSTRACT

This research focused on the education of gifted and talented students in one public school district in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It explored what was being done on the elementary level in the St. Thomas-St. John School district to educate high ability learners. This research study focused on what strategies and programs were being used to engage them in the learning process on a level that matches their abilities. It asked questions about what creative approaches, techniques, and procedures teachers felt should be used to engage highly able learners. Additionally, this study sought to learn what policies administrators in the district perceived as needed to enhance learning for high achieving students in the public schools. Further, this research focused on creative ways found in the school district and in the research literature to engage learners with exceptional ability and talent.

The findings from this study showed that the programs that currently exist cannot and do not

# ABSTRACT

take the place of educating the St. Thomas-St. John district's gifted and talented students which, based on the national percentages of 6-10%, should amount to between 314 to 523 students in the school district. In the interest of equity and social justice, this highly able student population within the St. Thomas-St. John school district needs specialized services. It is recommended that these students should be identified in the local school district and steps taken to define the need and develop a GATE program for students in the St. Thomas-St. John District. Recommendations from the participants and the literature were shared on best practices for engaging this population.

**Keywords:** gifted and talented students; GATE; gifted students, highly able learners; high ability students; high achieving students; advanced learners; academically talented students; academically advanced students, students with gifts and talents, engaging gifted and talented students; gifted and talented students in public schools; gifted and talented students in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

# Dissertation Committee

**Clinton Valley, EdD.**

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**Lisa Hassel Forde Ph.D.**

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