



Young Gifted and STEM Profile – Who Am I?

Deanna Clemmer – USA

1. Who are you and what is your STEM Superpower?

I am Deanna Chezzarae Clemmer and my STEM superpower is my ability to bring the sciences wherever I go! It's always been important to me that researchers and scientists are not the only ones that know about science. Everyone from CEOs to gym teachers should know the foundation in which research is built upon.

2. When did you first realise you were passionate about your STEM subject or field?

I was in about third grade, when I saw this huge caterpillar crawling on the wall. I took it home and my mother helped me create a home for it. Eventually, when I watched it form a Chrysalis and become a butterfly, I had nothing but questions about what made that possible. It opened up an entirely different universe!

3. Describe the route you took, which lead from finishing your GCSEs until now.

I am American, born and raised in the States, but after High school, I took a year off to volunteer as an *Emergency Medical Technician*. When I realized that it wasn't for me, I dedicated my time to volunteer to bring the sciences to underprivileged schools and areas around Arizona. From there, I went to college at High Point University in High Point, North Carolina from 2014 to 2018, majoring in **Biology**. In college, my life was engulfed by the sciences. If I wasn't volunteering out in the community, I was at a conference, giving talks, or preparing to do so. After College, I took a few months off in El Paso to spend with my husband. There, I volunteered with underprivileged grade school children who were not provided with science classes due to budget cuts in their school districts. After El Paso, I moved back to North Carolina to work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a



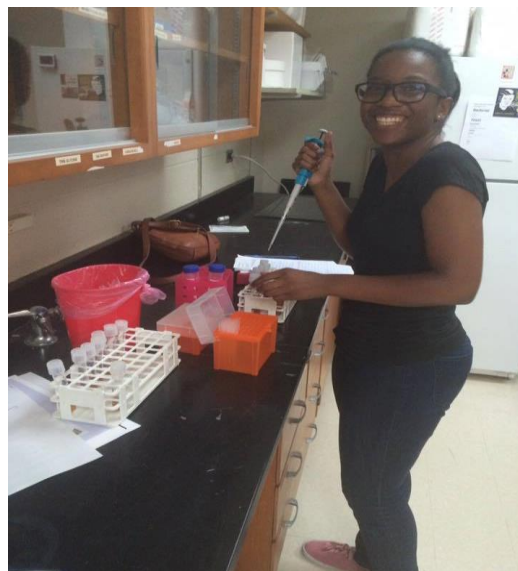
Research Technician in the Cystic Fibrosis Center. I worked under the distinguished researcher Dr. Silvia Kreda and learned more about the depths of the sciences on top of techniques I had already begun to master. One day on Twitter, I came across a tweet and encountered my current Principal Investigator, **Dr. Harry E. Taylor**. I saw that he was looking for a technician in his lab and from there, we just clicked. I am now a **Senior Research Support Specialist** in the Taylor Lab at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York.

4. If you had to study/focus on ONE STEM area for the rest of your career what would it be and why?

Immunology! It is an area that can be applied among many other areas based on what you learn. I see it as kind of the blood that runs through the veins of our current understanding of disease and ways to cure them.

5. What do you enjoy most about your day to day role?

I enjoy the environment! It is a place of constant growth as a scientist in technique, in knowledge, and in building the foundation of a career.



Deanna in the lab!



6. Who would name as your main STEMspiration and why?

Dr. Veronica Segarra at High Point University. Despite my mediocre grades as a college student, she allowed me into her lab and really took them time to help me explore my scientific passions. As a minority woman in the sciences herself, she and I connected on levels that I would not have experienced otherwise. She pushed me much harder because she knew I had a voice and passion that was overshadowed by my ethnicity, but she also showed the value of my hard work. The foundation of who I am as a scientist is all of her doing.

7. Outside of STEM, what are your other hobbies?

I love playing music! I play everything from the drums to the glockenspiel. In addition to that, I love to write short stories, poetry, and full-blown novels.

8. Lastly, if you could give our Young Gifted and STEM readers one piece of advice, what would it be?

STEM doesn't belong to one type of person or one type of ethnicity. Don't let anyone overshadow your passion because of *where you're from* or the **colour of your skin**. It's time to break the glass ceilings above our heads and take our seats among those who never thought we could sit there!

