



**SXSW EDU® ANNOUNCES RENOWNED STORYTELLING NONPROFIT THE MOTH AS ITS  
OPENING KEYNOTE IN “STORIES OF SCHOOLING AND GETTING SCHOOLED”  
TO ELEVATE STORYTELLING AND TEACHERS’ VOICES**

Four Educators Showcase Their Journeys and the Importance of Crafting Their Own Stories

February 6, 2018, AUSTIN, Texas – The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival announced today its exciting opening keynote featuring storytelling phenomenon and renowned podcast, The Moth. In this opening session on March 5, 2018, The Moth Education Program will deliver a dynamic storytelling showcase, featuring educators Micaela Blei, Chris De La Cruz, Crystal Duckert, and Tim Manley as they inspire attendees with the power of true stories from their lives—journeys taken inside the classroom and outside of it.

In this showcase, the four educators will engage the audience with short stories highlighting their teaching journeys. The program builds on the premise that teachers bring themselves into the classroom, and their classrooms into their lives. In exploring this intersection of teacher identity, The Moth will inspire listeners to find their voices and share their own stories, launching a week of learning and connection at SXSW EDU, including their hands-on workshop for attendees to learn storytelling skills.

“Since its inception, SXSW EDU has aspired to elevate the voice—and more broadly, the profession—of teaching,” said Ron Reed, Director of Emerging Events, SXSW. “In collaboration with The Moth Education Program, we’ve found a like-minded group who shares our intention and goal to elevate every educator’s story. Mixing life and learning, we are thrilled to bring this inspirational kickoff to SXSW EDU 2018—spotlighting educator and innovator voices through the art of storytelling, to empower us all, in the days to come and beyond, to engage authentically, inform honestly, and inspire one another greatly.”

“Telling stories about our experiences connects us to one another, to our students, and even to our own identities as teachers,” says Micaela Blei, head of The Moth Education Program and one of the educators slated to take the stage at SXSW EDU. “We’re thrilled to work with SXSW EDU to present this special showcase.”

Opening Keynote Voices are:

- Micaela Blei is a former third grade classroom teacher, two-time Moth GrandSLAM winner, PhD candidate, and Director of Education and Community Programs at The Moth. She has facilitated storytelling workshops and directed performance programs in schools across New York City and nationwide, as well as giving keynotes and professional development workshops at SXSW EDU, Lincoln Center Institute, Columbia University Reading and Writing Project, School of Visual Arts, and others. Micaela has regularly appeared on The Moth’s Mainstage across the country and on The Moth Radio Hour, and her solo storytelling show, "The Secret Life of Your Third Grade Teacher," was a sold-out FringeFAVE at the 2016 NYC Fringe. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Education at New York University, focusing on personal narrative performance.

· Chris De La Cruz is a regular host for the Moth High School Slams. He is a comedian, storyteller, and social justice educator originally from Dayton, Ohio. Originally trained as a teaching artist, he later received his MA in English Education from New York University. He is a founding Learning Coach at South Bronx Community Charter High School where he teaches a social justice / media class titled #FIGHTTHEPOWER and Freestyle Comedy based on MTV's Wild N' Out. His focus is designing and consulting for curriculum that centers student voice and culture.

· Crystal Duckert is in her 13th year of teaching after receiving her degree from the University of Texas at Austin in Literature and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Trinity University. She is in her third year at the Greenhill School in Dallas, Texas where she teaches Narrative Non-Fiction and Contemporary Hip Hop Poetry to 11th and 12th grade students. As an avid reader and storyteller, Crystal believes that the stories we read come secondary to our life experiences. Because she values the power of storytelling, she works to inspire her students to use narrative writing as a way to find their voice and deepen their understanding of humanity.

· Tim Manley is a former high school English teacher in New York City. His true stories have been featured on The Moth Radio Hour, Gimlet Media's Surprisingly Awesome, and very briefly in HBO's Girls. His web series The Feels, about a teacher with way too many feelings, has been covered by BBC World Service, TeenVogue, and Slate. He is also a teaching artist with National Book Foundation's BookUp, Catapult, and The Moth's High School SLAM program.

To learn more about SXSW EDU speakers, please visit the speakers page, at <https://www.sxswedu.com/program/speakers/>

#### About The Moth

The Moth's mission is to promote the art and craft of storytelling and to honor and celebrate the diversity and commonality of human experience. Since launching in 1997, The Moth has presented over 30,000 true stories, told live, in front of audiences around the world. The Moth Education Program works with young people and educators to build community through storytelling workshops, performances, and innovative workshops. To learn more about The Moth, please visit [themoth.org](http://themoth.org).

#### About SXSW EDU

The SXSW EDU® Conference & Festival cultivates and empowers a community of engaged stakeholders to advance teaching and learning. The annual four-day event affords registrants open access to engaging sessions, immersive workshops, interactive learning experiences, film screenings, early-stage startups, business opportunities and networking. SXSW EDU is a component of the South by Southwest® family of conferences and festivals. Join the passionate and innovative community at SXSW EDU, March 5-8, 2018 in Austin, Texas. For more information, please visit <http://www.sxswedu.com>.

#### Press Credentials:

Press accreditation for SXSW EDU 2018 is available until February 7, 2018 at <http://www.sxswedu.com/press>.

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