



**35<sup>TH</sup> BSME ANNUAL HEADTEACHERS CONFERENCE**  
**6 - 9 MARCH 2017, BAHRAIN**  
**Crowne Plaza Conference Centre**

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**SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**



Yong Zhao, a dynamic and relevant speaker, is a Foundations Distinguished Professor in the School of Education at the University of Kansas and is also a professorial fellow at the Mitchell Institute for Health and Education Policy, Victoria University in Australia.

Yong previously served as the Presidential Chair and Director of the Institute for Global and Online Education in the College of Education, University of Oregon, where he was also a Professor in the Department of Educational Measurement, Policy, and Leadership.

His work focuses on the implications of globalization and technology on education. He has published over 100 articles and 30 books, including *Counting What Counts: Reframing Education Outcomes* (2016), *Never Send a Human to Do a Machine's Job: Correcting Top 5 Ed Tech Mistakes* (2015) and *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Dragon: Why China has the Best (and Worst) Education System in the World* (2014), to name a few.

Until December 2010, Yong Zhao was University Distinguished Professor at the College of Education, Michigan State University, where he also served as the Founding Director of the Center for Teaching and Technology, Executive Director of the Confucius Institute, as well as the US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence.

Zhao was born in China's Sichuan Province. He received his BA in English Language Education from Sichuan Institute of Foreign Languages in Chongqing, China in 1986. After teaching English in China for six years, he came to Linfield College as a visiting scholar in 1992. He then began his graduate studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1993. He received his M.A. in Education in 1994 and Ph.D. in 1996. He joined the faculty at MSU in 1996 after working as the Language Center Coordinator at Willamette University and a language specialist at Hamilton College.



Joshua Jay has spoken on magic and creativity at Google headquarters and lectured on deception at universities and museums across the USA. He recently appeared on stage at the Rubin Museum as part of their Brainwave series, performing and speaking alongside Neuroscientists on the role the brain plays in illusions. In 2012, he consulted and developed a unique commercial spot for HBO, using slight of hand to promote Game of Thrones and Boardwalk Empire.

Joshua Jay is also the author of thirteen books including the bestseller, *MAGIC: The Complete Course*, and has had his fine-art photography exhibited in several shows (appearing recently at the Culture Museum in Linz, Austria).

Joshua maintains a globetrotting performance and lecturing schedule and has performed in over fifty countries as well as appearing regularly on USA national television.



Dr Ger Graus OBE is a respected figure in the field of education. He is Director of Education and Partnerships at KidZania UK, the UK's first educational entertainment centre where children aged 4 to 14 experience the world of work through role-play.

Dr Graus was the founding Chief Executive of The Children's University (CU) Trust in 2007 and CU Trading in 2013. Under his watch, The Children's University became a multiple-award winning international charity providing 5 to 14 year olds with exciting and innovative learning opportunities.

Dr Graus moved to the UK in 1983 when he began his teaching career at Taverham High School in Norwich. He next moved on to a management position at Winifred Holtby School in Hull. He was Education Adviser to Manchester City Council (1991-96), responsible for the introduction of Modern Foreign Languages in primary schools. He was also a co-optee on the Curriculum Working Group for Modern Foreign Languages.

In 1996, he became Senior Inspector for Salford City Council where he was responsible for introducing the Government's Excellence in Cities initiative. Dr Graus was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Staffordshire University in 2011 and was made an Adjunct Fellow by the University of Adelaide in 2013.



Barry Speirs joined RSAcademics in 2014 as Head of Leadership Consultancy after a long international career in Human Resources with leading multinational companies. As the author of *The Art of International School Headship*, Barry conducted research with over 100 leaders of international schools in Asia and the Gulf region. The research benefited from his many years of work experience in Asia, the Middle East, North America and Eastern Europe. He has held HR Director positions with Burmah Castrol and BP, as well as a number of specialist regional roles in leadership development and employee relations for firms which include PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Barry has a post-graduate qualification in HR and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD). He works with various members of the RSAcademics consultancy team, particularly with our former Heads, to provide schools with support in a number of HR and leadership areas.



Mishal Kanoo serves as the Chairman of The Kanoo Group, one of the largest, independent and longest running family owned groups of companies in the Gulf region. He is also one of the most iconic business figures in the Middle East, featured on various magazines and listed in 'Top 100 Powerful Arabs 2013', 'The 15 Wealthiest Arab Businessmen in the World 2012', amongst others.

Born and educated in Bahrain, Mr Kanoo continued his college education in the USA, earning an MBA in Finance from the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He then pursued and obtained his second MBA from the American University of Sharjah where he occasionally teaches courses. Subsequently, he worked at Arthur Andersen in Dubai as an Auditor before taking up his current position in 1997.