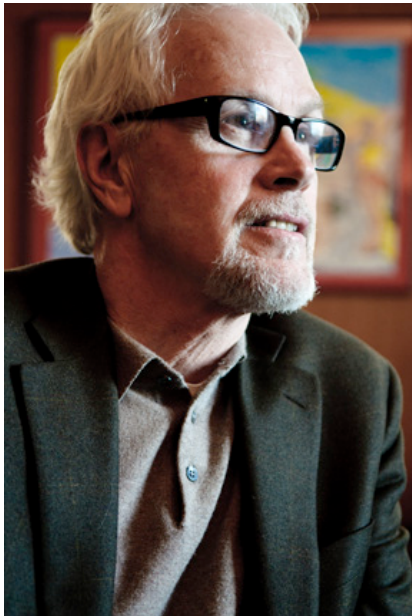


**Dr. Gary M. Sasso** by Christa Penrod



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*Dr. Gary Sasso is an educator, researcher, and author. He has earned a national reputation for his work and research with autism and social and behavioral disorders.*

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### **Education**

[Central Missouri State University](#), Warrensburg, MO  
B.S. Elementary and Special Education  
[University of Kansas](#), Lawrence, KS  
M.S. in Special Education  
[University of Kansas](#), Lawrence, KS  
Ph.D. Special Education

## **Background Information**

Dr. Sasso earned his bachelor degree in Elementary and Special Education from [Central Missouri State University](#). Prior to the completion of his undergraduate degree Sasso served in the Army during the Vietnam War from 1970 to 1972. Sasso was trained as a Medic in hospitals and in the field. The experience and insight gained from this type of work strengthened his understanding of accurate data collection and responsive treatment (Gary Sasso, personal communication, November, 2010). In 1977, Sasso completed his Master of Science in Special Education from the [University of Kansas](#), where he subsequently earned his Ph.D. in Special Education (Anonymous Author, 2010). A strong leader and advocate for evidence based research and practice, Dr. Sasso's contributions continue in special education and psychology, functional/structural analysis, philosophy of education, and Applied Behavior Analysis.

## **Career**

Dr. Sasso began his career as a classroom teacher for student with varied disabilities. As the sole teacher in a classroom of student's with mental disabilities, learning disabilities, and emotional and behavioral disorders he valued the experience but realized that he needed additional education in order to best serve and educate students. That summer Sasso moved to Kansas City, Kansas where he was enrolled in classes at the University of Kansas Medical Center in the area of emotional and behavioral disorders. The larger appeal of this move also included the importance of the instructor of the course, Dr. Richard Whelan, who at the time was a leader in the field. This move proved to professionally beneficial to Sasso. In addition to his coursework, Sasso engaged in a Child Psychiatry practicum experience and a federal grant aimed at determining if children with autism could be taught in public schools. The grant was help by

Dr. Richard Simpson and after a month into the project, Dr. Simpson offered him a teaching position with children with autism. In addition, Sasso could earn his MS degree and conduct behavioral analytic research. Following the completion of his MS degree, Sasso worked at Juniper Gardens School Research Unit with Dr. Debra Kamps, Charlie Greenwood, and R. Vance Hall (Gary Sasso, personal communication, November 2010).

Upon completion of the Ph.D. program, Dr. Sasso worked as an Assistant Professor of Special Education at the [University of Northern Colorado](#). From Colorado, Sasso relocated to Iowa City, Iowa and the [University of Iowa](#). While employed at the University of Iowa, Sasso served as both an assistant and associate professor of special education. In addition to his work in the classroom with future teachers of children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, Dr. Sasso gained an appointment as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Iowa. This position involved co-directing a team of multi-disciplinary clinic for individuals with severe behavior problems (Yencho, 2008). In 2001, Sasso was named Chairperson of the Department of Teaching and Learning.

### **Current Efforts**

In 2008, Sasso was named Dean of the [College of Education](#) at [Lehigh University](#) in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Currently, his interests include the philosophical and practical future of special education. Dr. Sasso continues to facilitate a number of projects involving social interactions for students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. Dr. Sasso and his wife, Christine, reside in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (Anonymous Author, 2008).

### **Honors, Awards, and Affiliations**

Since 1981, Dr. Sasso has remained active in many professional organizations. Professional affiliations include [Council for Exceptional Children](#), [Association for Behavior](#)

[Analysis](#), The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, [Teacher Educators for Children with Behavior Disorders](#), and [Autism Society of America](#). “Sasso is a prolific researcher, coauthoring nearly 100 scholarly publications and over 125 conference presentations” (Anonymous Author, 2008).

### **Awards**

- Award for Outstanding Leadership in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, [Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavioral Disorders](#).
- Recipient, James M. Kauffman Publication Award in Special Education, [Curry School of Education, University of Virginia](#).
- Nominated for University of Iowa Outstanding Teacher Award presented by the Iowa Board of Regents.

### **Publications**

#### **Books**

Kamps, D.M., Myles, B., Sasso, G.M., Simpson, R.L. (1991). Social Skills for students with autism. Reston, Virginia. The Council for Exceptional Children Publications.

#### **Book Chapters**

Sasso, G.M. (2008). The retreat from inquiry and knowledge in special education (Reprint). In M. Mosert, K. Kavale, & J. Kaufman (Eds.), *Challenging the refusal of reasoning in special education*. Denver: Love Publishing.

Sasso, G.M. (2007). Science and reason in special education: The legacy of Derrida and Foucault. In T. Landrum (Ed.), *Behavioral Disorders: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*.

### **Research and Training Manuals**

Sasso, G.M. (1983). Adult attitude change curriculum. Developed under federal contract 300-81-0412 with the United States Office of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. Severly Handicapped Intergration Project, University of Kansas Medical Center.

### **Media Programs**

Damico, S., Sasso, G., Maki, D., Bartlett, L., & Altmaier, B. (2006, February). Preparing doctoral student for the interview process. University of Iowa Television Broadcast, Iowa City, Iowa.

Sasso, G.M. (2005, April). The demise of the self-esteem movement: Construct validity and political motives. The Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Gazette, Newspaper Article.

### **Paper Presentations**

Kirk, J., & Sasso, G.M. (2008, April). Functional assessment through the use of a modified token reinforcement program: research and implementation. Address to the annual conference of the Exceptional Children, Boston, MA.

Kirk, J., & Sasso, G.M. (2007, February). Academic programming evidence base for students with autistic spectrum disorder. Presentation at the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders, Kansas City, MO.

### **Papers Published**

Kauffman, J.M., & Sasso, G.M. (2006). Toward ending cultural and cognitive relativism in special education. *Exceptionality*, 14, 91-107.

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- Jolivette, K., Stichter, J., & Sasso, G. (2000). Communication training using three functional variables for a student with severe emotional and behavioral disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 8, 222-235.
- Peck, J., Sasso, G.M., & Stambaugh, M. (1999). Structural analysis of social behavior: Reliability and validity issues. *Preventing School Failure*, 43 (1), 14-18.
- Simpson, R. L., & Sasso, G. M. (1978). The modification of rumination in a severely emotionally disturbed child in a public school setting through the use of an overcorrection procedure. *AAESPH Review*, 3 (3), 45-60.

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- Kamps, D.M., Myles, B., Sasso, G.M., Simpson, R.L. (1991) *Social skills for students with autism*. Reston, Virginia. The Council for Exceptional Children.
- Sasso, G. (2008). Curriculum vitae. Retrieved from Lehigh University Faculty Web site: [http://www.lehigh.edu/education/assets/vitas/sasso\\_081308b.pdf](http://www.lehigh.edu/education/assets/vitas/sasso_081308b.pdf)

Yencho, T. (2008). University of Iowa's Sasso named dean of Lehigh's college of education.

University Reporter. Retrieved from

[http://www.3lehigh.edu/News/V2news\\_story.asp?iNewsID=2656](http://www.3lehigh.edu/News/V2news_story.asp?iNewsID=2656).

Photo: provided by Dr. Sasso, 2010.