

## Professional Learning Opportunities with Dr. Karin Hess

Dr. Karin Hess, author/coauthor of more than a dozen books/book chapters and the [Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrices](#), is a former classroom teacher and school administrator. She is recognized internationally as a leader in applying the concepts of cognitive rigor, depth of knowledge (DOK), and learning progressions to the development of state and school-based curriculum and assessment systems. Over the years, she has distinguished herself as a content expert in multiple content areas, specializing in the design and use of performance-based assessments for preK-12 and competency-based education.

Dr. Hess offers a variety of workshop opportunities to school leaders and teachers in deeper learning - applying depth of knowledge/DOK to curriculum, instruction, and assessment design. Workshop plans can include a combination of in-person and virtual presentations customized for each school or district.

If you are serious about making a lasting impact on teaching and assessment practices across classrooms in your schools, Karin suggests planning ongoing professional learning sessions, with time for implementation, practice, and reflection in between. Currently, Karin's work is built around her most recent books: [Applying Depth of Knowledge and Cognitive Rigor, Rigor by Design, Not Chance; Elevating Competency-Based Learning in a PLC at Work; and Deeper Competency-Based Learning.](#)

Some schools begin with a half-day in person presentation followed by 2 - 4 virtual webinars with practice and coaching in between. Other schools might schedule a series of four to six book study webinars spread across the school year. Many schools choose to start with school leaders and instructional coaches and then involve the entire teaching staff in similar workshops. All workshops are co-designed to be interactive and use video clips and content examples to illustrate key points. Karin also provides access to a wealth of materials posted on her [website](#). Below are a few of the topics or resources that Karin suggests.

### **1. Are your students thinking deeply or just working harder? Applying DOK and Cognitive Rigor into Instruction and Assessment**

In this session, we begin by developing a shared understanding of DOK/rigor and dispel several common misconceptions about what increased rigor actually looks like in the classroom. Karin will share how she applied cognitive research (how the brain learns) to develop the Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix and then apply that research to a range of instructional and assessment examples. We almost always begin here. [This topic can be broken into several sessions with practice time between sessions. For example, introduction/review of DOK, learning transfer, and the Hess CRMs; followed by Applying a Cognitive Rigor Mindset to Standards, Instruction, and Assessment Planning.](#)

**2. Rigor by Design, Not Chance: Supporting Deeper Thinking Through Actionable Instruction and Assessment**

Today, we expect *every* student to be ready for the challenges of the 21st century—to learn more, to master new technologies, to understand more deeply, and to *transfer* what they've learned to real-world contexts. Integrating 5 evidence-based "teacher moves" in an Actionable Assessment Cycle can build a supportive classroom culture for deeper thinking and self-directed learning. Karin will define what “actionable assessment” is and provide content-specific examples for lesson planning within an actionable assessment cycle. [This can be broken into several sessions with practice time between sessions. For example, there might be a session focusing on each of the five teacher moves with follow-up classroom walk-throughs.](#)

**3. Designing formative and performance assessment**

In this session, we examine ways to “power up” DOK levels of current assessments by analyzing multiple content examples provided with guided practice with an existing unit of study that teachers bring with them. Purposes and uses for common assessments and protocols for student work analysis will be practiced. Teachers collaboratively draft a performance assessment (scenario, task, or problem-based learning project) using her STARS protocol and can collect student work samples.

**4. Rigor by Design: Looking for Deeper Learning in all the Right Places:** This session explores how the Hess CRM illustrates teacher - student role “shifts” to move towards more student-centered (personalized and problem-based) learning. Participants will practice using the Hess’ Walk-Through tools to look for examples of deeper questioning and discourse, complex tasks, and use of *strategic* scaffolding. [Designed for instructional coaches, school leaders, or peer coaching activities. Some schools invite Karin to do collaborative walk-throughs and debriefing with them.](#)

**5. Elevating Competency-Based Learning OR Project-Based Learning in a PLC at Work**

Participants work in teams to analyze current PLC goals [framed by 4 PLC questions](#). Workshop agendas are fluid, based on local priorities (e.g., revise assessments to achieve deeper more rigorous learning; integrate strategic scaffolding and differentiation). [Co-designed for school instructional leaders who facilitate PLC activities.](#)

**6. Content-specific Or grade-level specific workshops**

Karin can customize any of the workshops described above for specific content areas or grade level classrooms. For example, a high school science focus, a preK-2 focus, or working with special needs students.