

# CHEAT SHEET: REDEFINING LESSON PLANS

"In an increasingly complex, demanding and competitive 21st century, students need to learn more than the 3R's they are tested on in school. It's time to help them go 'above & beyond', by embracing the 4Cs - **communication, collaboration, critical thinking** and **creativity**."

"Above & Beyond, The Story of the 4Cs." *Above & Beyond*. Fablevision & The Partnership for 21st Century Learning. 2011.

## What is it?

When used well, technology can make your teaching -- and your students' learning -- more engaging, efficient, and effective. But do you have to scrap your tried-and-true lesson plans and start over? Not at all! There are steps you can take to scaffold your own learning around integrating technology into your daily practices. See step-by-step how you can upgrade your lessons for 21st-century learning.

## How do I get started?

- 1. Revisit instructional goals.** Teachers know to "begin with the end in mind." Using backward design, start with your desired outcomes. Next, set learning objectives. And last, pick resources like digital tools.
- 2. Explore!** This landscape is ever-changing, so make sure you take time to play a bit with new tools to better understand what may be possible.
- 3. Beg, borrow, steal. (Did we say that?)** Don't reinvent the wheel. Find existing ideas or advice from others at your school or online. Just modify the activities and lessons to personalize and differentiate the learning for your classroom's needs.
- 4. Self-reflect.** From the hook in the beginning to the wrap-up in the end, how and why have you integrated digital tools? Look to the SAMR model as one way to evaluate your change in practice.
- 5. Be flexible.** Each learner is different; each class is different; each year is different (not to mention, digital tools are always changing too). Stay flexible, and be prepared to refine, revise, and revamp your lessons over time.

## My notes:

## A-ha's!

**Avoid being "toolcentric."** Sure, digital tools can be fun and engaging, but always keep your learning goals in mind. Avoid using "tech for tech's sake."

**Have a Plan B.** "Oh, technology!" is a typical cry. Something is bound to go wrong at some point, so be ready to not let a tech snafu interrupt your students' learning.

**Not a tech guru?** No worries! Start with a few tools you're comfortable with. Don't forget to lean on your colleagues for advice. And remember that your students may be your best tech support of all. Leverage their expertise!

## How might digital tools improve or enhance what you're already doing?