

# **Digital Storytelling with iMovie™**

**Teach Powerful Storytelling  
with the Australian Curriculum**

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### **Deductive Activity:**

1. Find a partner and select a common favourite movie.
2. Decide upon a powerful scene from the movie.
3. Draw out on the blank storyboard 2–4 images from this powerful scene.
4. Reflect on the story and technical elements that made the scene so important to you.
5. Review the deductive storyboard for accuracy.
6. Share and explain the storyboard with the entire group.
7. Synthesise what makes scenes powerful for the entire group.

### **Inductive Activity:**

1. Find another partner and brainstorm a powerful scene for a movie (imaginary).
2. Draw elements of the scene on a blank storyboard form.
3. Continue (2–4 images) until you feel comfortable with the entire scene.
4. Reflect on the story and the technical elements that you plan to emphasise in making this scene.
5. Review for completeness and “sell-ability”.
6. Share with the whole group (mock producers) to receive their feedback and support.
7. Reflect with the whole group about putting in story ideas and technical elements.
8. Optional: Use a digital camera, PowerPoint or other software to create this scene for your original digital story.

## **More About Knowledge Management**

According to Webster’s Dictionary ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)), “knowledge is the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association”. What students learn becomes their knowledge base. How they organise and communicate what they know becomes part of the storytelling process. Students use storyboards to help them manage what they know to create, plan and share stories.

Students apply knowledge management skills through the storyboarding process. Knowledge management emerged as a concept from business and information organisations in the 1980s and 1990s. The Graduate School of Business, University of Texas at Austin’s website provides the following definition of knowledge management:

The systematic process of finding, selecting, organizing, distilling and presenting information in a way that improves an employee’s comprehension in a specific area of interest. Knowledge management helps an organization to gain insight and understanding from its own experience. Specific knowledge management activities help focus the organization on acquiring, storing, and utilizing knowledge for such things as problem solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning and decision making. It also protects intellectual assets from decay, adds to firm intelligence and provides increased flexibility. (<http://web.archive.org/web/20050203034515/http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/kman/answers.htm>)

# Chapter 5

## Critical Thinking and Story Elements

Story elements are an essential part of the structure of the story. Without this structure, stories can be rambling, unfocused and lack impact. Using story elements not only gives definition and focus to the story, but also allows storytellers to apply what they know about how people think and learn. Using these tools gives storytellers a story syntax for the content, delivery and impact of their story.

Critical thinking skills are important for making powerful digital stories. Students need to be able to think logically and objectively about their subject, story elements and presentations. Critical thinking has been defined as “...the analysis of any attempt at persuasion, based on an evaluation of the form and content of that attempt. Thinking critically is a strategy for determining how to persuade others, and whether to be persuaded ourselves” (<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/education/think/critdefs.htm>). The ability to analyse the story in terms of elements of thought and persuasiveness creates better storytellers.

### Story Elements

The Center for Digital Storytelling has created wonderful tools for teaching digital storytelling and building community through story elements. They teach the following elements:

- Pacing
- Dramatic question
- Gift of voice
- Soundtrack
- Point of view
- Emotional content
- Economy

A rich description of each of these is available in their book, *Building Community*, which is available at their website ([www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org)). Our purpose here is to briefly describe each of them and then tie each to critical thinking skills.

**Pacing** is the flow of story events. The overall speed of the presentation has a lot to do with audience, story content and impact. Younger audiences who are used to rapid-fire internet presentations expect a faster pace. Pacing can be established in the storyboarding and editing process for the duration of each scene and the transitions between scenes. Storytellers need to think about how the pace affects the audience’s ability to comprehend and appreciate the story.

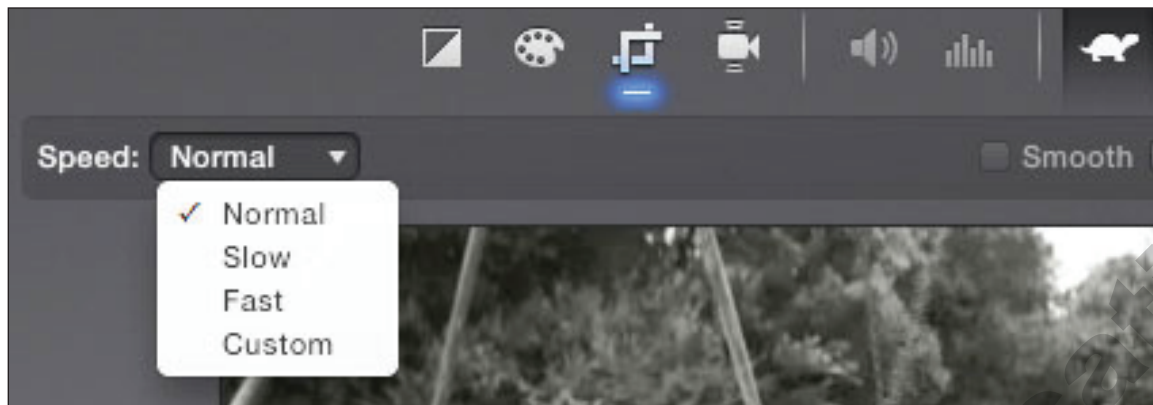


Figure 10.7: Video Adjustment tool

You can select the speed from the drop-down menu, choosing from either Normal, Slow, Fast or Custom speed.

### How to Evaluate Edits and Transitions

Essentially, the scoring rubric seeks to insure that transitions are appropriate and not used gratuitously. In a dramatisation or interview, visual transitions can be very distracting. Conversely, in a how-to video, visual transitions can effectively separate the steps in a process or show the passage of time between steps. The point is to use transitions appropriate to the project. If you don't notice the transitions, then they were probably successful.



<b>1 Point</b>	Transitions and edits are confusing; transitions are overused or are not used when needed; transitions and edits detract from the flow of the video
<b>3 Points</b>	Most transitions and edits are smooth but some seem out of place and are distracting; most edits and transitions are appropriate to the subject matter but some are distracting
<b>5 Points</b>	Transitions and edits are smooth and do not distract from the video; transitions and edits are appropriate to the subject matter and add to the flow of the video

**Reflectors** are used to reflect secondary light from a light source onto a subject. For example, imagine filming an interview. The subject is on a stool in a darkened room to minimise the background. A strong light is directed toward the subject from about 45 degrees. This would cause significant shadows on the subject's face. To compensate, a reflector is set up off-camera on the shadow side of the subject to reflect light back onto the subject to minimise the harsh shadows. Reflectors can be made of tinfoil (crumple it up first to break up the harsh reflective surface) or from white foam board. Highly reflective surfaces, like mirrors, cast too strong a light and should be avoided.



## iMovie Interface: Correcting Lighting Problems

### Correcting Colour and Exposure Problems

We can't always shoot video or take pictures under the best of conditions. Inevitably, some story content is going to be over- or under-exposed, have washed-out colours, or have unusual colour casts. This is especially true for clips shot on snow (the snow may look very blue) or in low light. While most cameras have special settings to compensate for these conditions, it's not always possible to use them. Enter iMovie's Video Adjustment tool.

To correct a problem with colour or exposure, move your cursor over an image or a clip, click the Adjustment icon and select Color Correction (a paint palette).

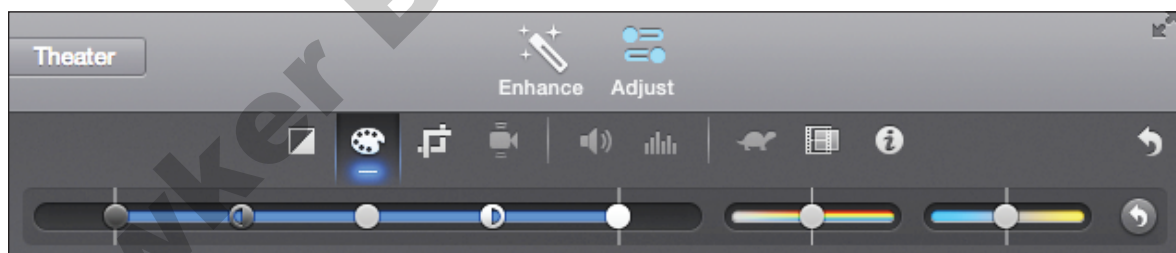


Figure 13.2: Colour Correction menu

The Colour Correction window appears and allows you to move sliders to change colour and exposure values. If your image is over-exposed (too bright), try moving the Exposure slider to the left. If the colours seem washed out, adjust the brightness by moving around the slider on the left. The middle slider will change the colour saturation of the image. The slider on the right will change the temperature of the image, that is, it will make the colours warmer or cooler depending on which way you move the slider. You'll often find that changing one slider—for example, moving the Brightness slider to the right to brighten up your colours—will necessitate changing another slider. Experiment with various settings; you can always click Revert to Original