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Lights, camera, education

Sunday, 18 October 2009

by SEPP JANNOTTA - Ravalli Republic



Russell Spaan gets some individual instruction from instructor Mike Henderson, who points out a program feature in Adobe Photoshop during a Wednesday evening class in the MAPS after-school program. SEPP JANNOTTA - Ravalli Republic

In the afternoon, they come to learn the ropes.

They travel from up and down the Bitterroot Valley for a chance to gain the skills required to make movies and the other media consumables that are the staple of an increasingly electronic culture.

Some lessons are nuts and bolts: White balance. Pixel manipulation. Registering a Web site domain name.

Some are more creative: The use of lighting and camera angles. Script writing. Design.

It all adds up to the MAPS Media Institute's new after school program and, to be sure, this is not the audio-visual club your school's jocks and bullies used to target.

The program is about much more than what MAPS founder Peter Rosten calls "technological widgets."

"We're not trying to teach great widgeteers," Rosten said. "We're trying to teach great communicators."

Still, the MAPS classrooms are outfitted with all the gear needed to shoot and edit feature and documentary films, as well as work on the layers of information required to produce intricate and interactive Web sites.

With the help of a \$575,000 grant from the 21st Century Community Learning Center aimed at providing non-school-hours educational outlets for high school aged kids, MAPS has its facilities well equipped.

Reporter Sepp Jannotta can be reached at 363-3300 or sjannotta@ravallirepublic.com

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