



MCC Digital Arts Instructor Seth Sutton, center, works with students on a photography project. Pictured, from left, are Haylee Sigafoose of Greenville, Jordan Jenks of Sheridan and Zachary Lahti of Six Lakes.

“As an instructor, I act as a guide who provides the tools that allow students to construct knowledge rather than mechanically recite information,” Sutton said. “I give students inquiry-based projects in which they need to communicate their collective knowledge in a collaborative learning environment.”

The goal, Sutton said, is to encourage students to be “active participants in learning” and to “engage with the content by applying their existing knowledge and real-world experiences to formulate new outcomes.

“When I think about my role as a teacher, I believe the core principle is to provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge base to become effective, contributing members of their communities,” he added.

Sutton teaches all aspects of digital arts at MCC, including photography, commercial design, introduction to digital arts and more. In addition, he serves on the college’s curriculum committee, which reviews and makes recommendations on course content; the co-curricular committee, which oversees and coordinates special events at the college; is advisor of the DART League, a student club that provides a platform for creative expression; and is co-advisor of the Native American Club, which works to support the development of an inclusive campus environment, where indigenous heritage is accepted and celebrated.

Outside of MCC, Sutton also serves as a board member on the Native American Advisory Council at Grand Valley State University.

“My mission as an educator is simple,” Sutton said. “I want to promote a learning environment that is active, constructive, collaborative, goal-oriented and most importantly, meaningful.” ■

MCC Digital Arts Instructor **engages** students in hands-on **learning**

Seth Thomas Sutton brings a lifetime of experience to the classroom.

Sutton joined Montcalm Community College’s faculty in 2013 as its Digital Arts Instructor.

He has spent much of his career outside of education working as a commercial photographer and editor through his company, Big Thicket Media, serving clients such as HGTV, Anchor Hocking, Necco Candy Co. and others.

Sutton’s educational roots run deep. He grew up in a family of artists and educators, “all of whom taught me to highly value my education and to understand the moral implications of creating art and how it impacts our community.”

Sutton said his classroom approach is for students to learn actively, rather than passively.