

The Innovative Initiative Award
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The Illinois Council
on Continuing Higher Education

presents the

Innovative
Initiative Award

February 2009

The 2008 Innovative Initiative Award Recipient

Illinois State University

for program entitled

Students Involved with Technology (SIT) Conference

Presenters:

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Program Description

The Students Involved with Technology (SIT) Conference is a day-long technology event for students in grades 3 through 12. It is held on the campus of Heartland Community College in Normal, IL and is sponsored in partnership by Illinois State University, Heartland Community College, State Farm Insurance, local school districts, Regional Office of Education #17 and the public library. SIT is a conference for students and by students meaning that that the SIT Conference presentations are primarily given by students.

Students can choose to attend a full day of learning sessions on a wide range of technology subjects from robotics, gaming, Internet safety, web design and movie making, blogging, forensics, animation and much more. Students can further choose to be a presenter on a technology topic of their choosing, which involves creating a 20 minute session, handout and fielding questions and answers following their presentation/demonstration. Students at all levels have an environment of learning by doing, and by example. The SIT Conference seeks to provide a realistic and professional level conference experience for student attendees and presenters. The conference day includes opening and closing ceremonies, keynote speakers, multiple sessions by peers and by technology educators, experts and mentors. Typically, registrations for the conference reflect attendees from the local school districts in Central Illinois. The conference has also reached out to home school associations to provide students in similar grade ranges with opportunities to participate.

SIT is innovative in that the Conference supports learning practices at the student level, and combines that with a higher education framework. This partnership between higher education institutions gives students opportunities that normally would not exist in a typical classroom environment where all students are the same age. The conference is also being replicated in DeKalb, Illinois this February.