Meet Mike and Krista

**Michael Thompson**, iStep Technical Director, is one of two principle architects of the Colby College iStep Program, and lifetime subscriber to Data Dweeb magazine. Born in Oklahoma City to humble affluence, he has been steadily growing older ever since, without actually reaching maturity. Educated during the previous century at the University of Central Oklahoma, Mike was awarded a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, and a Master of Arts in Political Science graduating *summa cum laude*. After writing lengthy sentences and papers that were hailed by professors and critics alike as containing a tremendous amount of meaningless words and spaces, Oklahoma City University awarded him a Juris Doctor with *honors*. In this land of excessive consonants, Mike distinguished himself by indulging in heaven only knows what kind of carousing and debauchery without actually going to jail.

**Krista Carter**, iStep Academic Director, at 5’4 is unintentionally the shorter and nicest of the two principle architects of the iStep Program. While she looks harmless, Krista performs alongside Mike’s corruptive influence. She is legendary for incredibly dull meetings, some of which are still going on. Krista received her AA from Colby College, BS from Oklahoma Panhandle State University, M.Ed from Western Alabama University, DNA from her parents, and her husband watches ESPN. Upon completing her university studies Krista found herself well educated and immediately unemployed. After taking the notable job of Narrator for Bad Mimes, Krista came full circle returning to Colby College as a faculty member in the Behavioral Sciences. Being told she could name her salary she sadly chose the name “Pathetic.” Fortunately, when it came time to name her children she relied on a book of baby names - the “phone book.” The mother of two young children, Krista often lectures students on the hazards of marriage, and making babies in only 9 months with tools you probably have around the house.

The accomplishments, honors and awards garnered by these two are hard to exaggerate and too few to mention, even here. It is their actions that speak volumes and bring to life their unique perspective on 21st century learning and higher education. Unusual attendance patterns, creative assignment completion and imaginative use of excuses are but a few of their contributions to academia. These two often take the road less traveled. Krista blames this on Mike’s refusal to stop and ask for directions. Contact this dynamic duo at [iStep.academy@colbycc.edu](mailto:iStep.academy@colbycc.edu)

**iStep** is our revolutionary pedagogy that blends the performing, literary and digital arts with classroom instruction and technology. iStep stands for *instructing Students with technology for educational progress*. The *S* is capitalized to emphasize our focus on students and their needs. iStep is not simply moving the Internet to the classroom, it’s moving the classroom to the Internet. iStep pedagogy has multiple components beyond the course structure and delivery platform. Its focus is on instructional quality supported by 21st century tools. The impact on student achievement has been dramatic and consistent across disciplines, our students are simply learning.

The cornerstone of iStep is our iProfessor training. Our iProfessors are proficient in the use instructional technology, coupled with knowledge of 21st century instructional design and delivery. Enhanced by comprehensive, innovative and interactive teaching methods, that apply dynamic principles of the performing, literary and digital arts to the mediated classroom, our iProfessors communicate in the language and dynamic style of our 21st century students. Each of these creative approaches has similarities, but is inspiring with its differences as we learn new ways to approach our craft.

**CHANGE IS INEVITABLE,**

**PROGRESS IS OPTIONAL,**
For Colby Community College, latecomers to e-Learning, the “traditional vs. online” debate wasn’t an either or proposition; the best teaching involved both. Embracing learning technology and better management of time in the classroom was only the beginning. To create these new frontier-learning environments, we collaborated with professionals in the performing, literary and digital arts to develop our skills. Our continued success and advancement leads us to conclude that Blended Learning is key to the 21st century classroom. When done well, it can improve student engagement, learning and success. Designing, structuring, and implementing a blended course, isn’t simply a matter of moving written material onto the class website. The media-enhanced instruction must be carefully choreographed and engaging. It must reflect the instructor’s personality and the best of their delivery style regardless of the delivery platform. Blending emerging technology with the creative arts help our faculty create a rich learning environment that combines the strongest features of traditional and online teaching. Once technology is seen as a normal part of the learning process, ed-tech buzzwords lose relevance, our students are simply learning. In this session we will show the pedagogical benefits and practical advantages of Blending learning with technology, and integrating the creative and digital arts into the curriculum.