

TUESDAY TIPS

OCTOBER 7, 2014



Technology News from NJSP

- Listen and Talk to Your Mac
- Learning Differences MOOC
- Epic! For Educators

TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION

Listen and Talk to Your Mac

In OS X 10.8, the Mac's ability to **listen and talk** is really impressive. Although these are sometimes framed as being accessibility features, they can be useful for everyone. For example, it's a good idea to read through any important text before you send it off, but it's easy to skip mistakes when you're reading your own work. Instead, turn on the speech feature in the Dictation & Speech System Preference pane. You can control the speed and pick from a range of different voices.

If you find you use the feature often, you should enable the option to trigger speaking aloud using a keyboard shortcut - the default is Option+Esc, which you can change in the Dictation & Speech pane. (If you do have restricted vision, investigate the VoiceOver feature in the Accessibility pane of System Preferences too; this can read aloud buttons and other on-screen items, and more.)



Your Mac is just as good a **listener** as it is a **talker**. Not only can you control your Mac using Speakable Items (check the Accessibility pane) but in OS X 10.8 you can also dictate text anywhere you would type. By default you just press the Function key twice and then start **talking**.



So when you are too tired to type, just tell your computer what you want to put down on the page and when your favorite person is not available to edit your papers, your computer can read aloud what you've written. If you feel generous, pass this bit of info on to your students!

Learning Differences

MOOC

Learning Differences Massive Open Online Course for Educators (**MOOC-Ed**) opened October 6, 2014. This free course is intended for teachers (new and veteran), instructional coaches, and administrators who want to learn more about and develop tangible approaches to address learning differences, such as executive function, working memory, and motivation.

Following the six-week course, instructional coaches, media coordinators, and teacher leaders will have to participate in an additional three units focused on strategies for coaching and supporting other teachers in their work with learning differences.

Sponsored by various groups in cooperation with North Carolina State University's College of Education, this **MOOC** ends on November 14, but participants can extend their course until November 28.

courses.mooced.org/ld1/preview



EPIC! FOR EDUCATORS

Last week *EPIC!* began offering elementary classroom teachers and school librarians in the U.S. and Canada free (forever) single subscription access to its iPad app, an “ever-growing library of high-quality children’s books from some of the world’s best publishers.”

EPIC! calls itself *the first “All-You-Can-Read” eBook service for kids.* It currently offers thousands of digital titles from 40 publishing partners, including HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster, National Geographic, Kids Can Press, Blue Apple Books. The growing digital collection of titles for ages 2 through 12 includes many recent and award-winning books and represents a mix of fiction and nonfiction. New titles are added each week.

Among the popular fiction and series titles available are: *Olivia*, *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*, *The Berenstain Bears*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Ramona*, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, *Flat Stanley*, *Scaredy Squirrel* and *Big Nate*. There’s a wealth of high quality attractive nonfiction and graphic novels as well.

To get this app, you’ll need to go to [<https://www.getepic.com>](https://www.getepic.com) to register. You’ll need to enter your school name and zip code, your name and email, and a password. When you click the button to create your account, you’ll be agreeing to their Terms of Service and their Privacy Policy. You will also affirm that you are an educator and can provide proof of occupation. Proof of occupation is often a pay stub.