

# Example Personal Learning Ecologies Narrative

## Becoming a Better Morris Dancer

I have taken it upon myself to develop an expert understanding of the Morris dancing and related folk music tradition with focus on learning to play the pipe and tabor. I've committed myself to this journey and for me its about getting to mastery, not the rate in which I get to mastery. I purposefully put myself in positions to learn more. I have been documenting my process in learning the pipe and tabor and regularly seek out opportunities to deepen my understanding of Morris dancing and playing these traditional musical instruments. I have felt this is slowing due to not getting the correct mentorship and feedback as I try to learn, and not knowing what is my next step toward deliberate practice is difficult. I continue to read books on the subject and attend festivals and face-to-face workshops to learn more. Recently two things have occurred that I consider show the difference between a *learning ecology* and a *learning network*.

A while back I was searching for books in these subject areas. My emerging learning network on this subject pointed me toward a couple of books which I have begun to read. One of the books describes when learning the pipe and tabor it is good to do this by ear, and it is a good idea to practice while sitting at a piano so you can listen correctly to the notes as playing on the piano then play them on the pipe. This back and forth between piano and pipe will greatly assist in learning the tones that occur when over-blowing the pipe. Training the ear is important to learning the pipe. Even though the book(s) came via my network, it is the presence of these books close at hand that put them into my ecology.

I have also been focused on learning a jig called "I'll go and enlist for a sailor". Some of the steps were eluding me. Over this last weekend I attended the Marlboro Morris Ale (1) and was fortunate enough to meet John Dexter (2), who could teach me the jig. I was shown the steps in detail by a master of the dance (3), much of the mystery of the steps were demonstrated, they are no longer a mystery. All my reading of the dance, watching videos had prepared me well for this master / apprentice type session. I was ready to learn and the correct situation presented itself as I was on my learning journey. The Morris Ale became a part of my learning ecology.

1



3



2



These are both examples of my personal learning ecology. They show how I put myself into situations with people who were more expert than me in order to learn. I focused my learning on what was directly in front of me as resources instead of searching my broader network. Most often it is important to hold the faith that the right learning will be available at the right time.