WHITHER PACE? THE PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION
AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT EDUCATION

by

DAVID SMULDERS

BA Classical Studies, The University of Ottawa, 1990
MA Classics, The University of Victoria, 1992

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Abstract

The tradition of adult education as a domain of knowledge and an area for professional practice has yet to define itself to any degree of satisfying consensus, although there are discernable threads or dominant narratives that run through its history and represent particular views of the field. This study takes a close look at one instance of how this struggle for an identity within adult education has played out by examining the final years of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education (PACE), a voluntary professional adult education organization, and considering the reasons behind some of its successes and challenges and ultimately the decision by its membership to disband in the year 2000. The study also focuses on the personal narratives of some of PACE’s members and seeks to allow the voices of the organization’s membership to contribute to the description of its overall character particularly in its final years.

The stories of the study participants provide important insights into the unraveling of PACE and how this experience fits into the big picture of adult education. Despite commitment to the aims of adult education, members found themselves in an organization that had been conceived and launched under a particular set of social and political circumstances, which then changed over time. Subsequent years of PACE’s history were thus marked by the members’ attempts to reconceptualize the role of the professional adult education organization as their identities as adult educators and the field itself were changing. As a result of these changes, the membership drifted both on an individual basis and collectively from its close association to the post-secondary institutes where adult and continuing education received its most formal recognition. During these years, PACE’s leadership began to change as well, becoming less influential and socially connected within and beyond the world of adult education. Such changes prompted the PACE membership to devote more and more time looking inward, hence the collective self examination that members came to know as “Whither PACE?” – a series of discussions, reflections and research efforts into defining PACE’s raison d’être and future directions. Ultimately, the decision was reached that as an organization PACE could no longer represent the voice of adult educators and learners in British Columbia. As a result, members had to confront the unpleasantness of their organization’s own demise.
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A final word of thanks goes to the people who agreed to be interviewed for this research project. This thesis is a modest attempt to recognize their dedication to the field.
Dedication

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my partner, Laura Beth Stewart, and our two children, Charlie and Leo. Without their unflagging support and patience, none of this would have any meaning.
Chapter 1: Whither PACE Part 1: Introduction

In many respects, adult education is still an emerging field. Despite considerable maturity in the past century and the development of an historical consciousness, it is still susceptible to varying interpretations as to its exact definition. This is a long way from being a domain of "muddled confusion" as Eduard Lindeman (1938, p. 48) called it, but one could argue that the more the field of adult education develops the more inscrutable it becomes. Coolie Verner (1961) referred to the "haphazard evolution of the field" (p. 229) but it might be just as accurate to refer to the evolution of an inherently haphazard field. In this search for a definition of adult education, one of the prevailing themes in its history is the ongoing tension between those who see adult education as part of a broad social movement and those who are more concerned with adult education as a practice entrusted to qualified professionals. Perhaps nowhere is this tension more evident than in adult education organizations, whose membership serves to represent something approaching an official identity for adult educators.

The history of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education (PACE) reveals the long-running internal struggle among its members to define the role and function of PACE as an organization representative of both adult learners and adult educators. This struggle, involving divergent views on the identity of adult educators, turns out to be an inextricable characteristic of PACE, and, by extension, the field of adult education in general. Like the word 'haphazard,'
struggle seems to be part of the nature of adult education (Welton, 1987). If an organization is meant to be a collective expression of identity, then its very survival depends on the assumption that its members share common perceptions of that identity. If this is missing or in dispute, then an organization is bound to face a crisis of its own existence. The final decade of PACE not only reveals an organization on the wane from its heady beginnings decades earlier, but it also provides a window into the world of the professional adult educator and the inherent challenges faced by those who identify strongly with the field.

PACE was a place for adult educators to gather and connect, to share their concerns as practitioners, and feel part of a movement that had its own unique history, traditions, and vision for the future. It was a border area of sorts between the academic world and the world “out there” where so many adult educators could be found, usually just inside the backdoor to their calling, a place with close ties to the university but distinctly beyond it. By the late 1990s, that connection was lost somehow and the organization found itself without enough common ground to stand on. What happened? Where did all the adult educators go? This study is one attempt to uncover some of their tracks.

In the beginning

According to its own historical lore, the Pacific Association for Continuing Education (PACE) owed its existence to a dinner meeting in the autumn of 1954 (Connections, 1998). On that night, Roby Kidd was in Vancouver to discuss the state of adult education in British Columbia. This is skipping over
the details just slightly—from 1954 to 1972 different adult education organizations were formed, disbanded, and merged, resulting in the founding of the Association for Continuing Education (ACE), later renamed PACE with the addition of Pacific to the title. But the linkage to Roby Kidd, one of the pioneers of Canadian adult education, reveals a yearning to be part of a greater tradition, reaching out to the frontiers both historically and geographically. Undoubtedly, those around the table for the founding moments of PACE in the early 1970s saw themselves as a natural part of a tradition of participation amongst adult educators and activism on behalf of adult learners.

The founding of PACE in the “year of affirmation for adult education”

Could there have been a more propitious year for the founding of an umbrella adult education association than 1972, which has been called the “year of affirmation for adult education” (Selman, 1989)? This optimistic view is largely due to the official prominence gained by adult education through a confluence of events and publications that gained the attention of the public. Of particular significance, according to Selman, was the publication in Canada of two commission reports in Ontario (The Learning Society) and Alberta (A Choice of Futures) and on the international stage the famous and now much revered report Learning To Be commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In all three reports, the concept of lifelong learning established adult education as a priority upon which governments were encouraged to act quickly and decisively. This was indeed a critical time in the
history of adult education, for lifelong learning, or perhaps more accurately lifelong education, not only gained a certain caché and popular appeal, but it also became—for better or worse—the dominant discourse underlying the field.

At the same time, theories of adult education were gaining in popularity, prominence, and credibility. This was a period when adult education as a field of inquiry produced some of its strongest and most definitive ideas. In North America, these included Malcolm Knowles’s (1970) promotion of andragogy as a new way of looking at how adults learn and Allen Tough’s pioneering work on self-directed learning (1979), both of which encouraged a focus on the learner as the focal point of any adult education related activity. Andragogy and self-directed learning are interesting not only for the spotlight that they brought to adult education at the time, but also because they were instrumental ideas for shaping the current character of adult education as a learner-centred enterprise.

This was also the time of the publication of Ivan Illich’s *Deschooling Society* (1971) and Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), both of which were to contribute to the growing knowledge base of adult education and help gain greater recognition for the field. Radical and ambitious in his conceptions about education, Illich nonetheless spoke to adult educators in terms with which they could sympathize: a resistance to institutionalization, emancipation resulting from social interactions free from systematic organization and control, and the development of peer networks out of the reach of the intellectual monopolies
established by the class of professionals. Freire, by contrast, projected a much more humble image, the teacher of peasants, with a vision to transform the world. He soon became one of adult education's great heroes (Boshier, 1998).

However, it is worth noting that the ideas that gained such prominence in 1972 mark a great turning point in the history of adult education rather than any sort of end. Of course, the antecedents to the work of Knowles, Tough, and other great names in the field are numerous and represent an ongoing discussion and development of consciousness in adult education. The year 1972 was not a surprise in that sense. However, looking back from a perspective of more than 30 years later, it is possible to see how these ideas not only burst onto the public spotlight at the time but also embedded themselves in the fabric of what we consider to be adult education today. To those who associated with the field, this was a time when adult education was gaining credibility as a profession and a legitimate academic discipline.

Adult education's coming of age

How different are the settings that define adult education in BC in the spring of 2000, a lifetime away from Roby Kidd's dinner talk. Who was Roby Kidd anyway? The question itself approaches blasphemy since Kidd is a name to be revered, having passed into the pantheon of Canadian adult educators, no longer the trailblazer of a proud social movement but now a name to be introduced to students of Foundations courses. His picture hangs in one of the classrooms of the Ponderosa H building on the campus of the University of
British Columbia. The black and white portrait, showing a clean cut figure with slicked back hair and dark bushy eyebrows, was taken in 1954, the same year he gave his legendary dinner talk. His expression reveals the energy and generosity of spirit for which he was famous. Is his the face of a bygone era?

In the spring of 2000, the PACE membership was dealing with the death of one of its own, another founding father. Knute Buttedahl, who had been involved in the discussions that led to the founding of PACE and who had served as President from 1979-1981 and again twenty years later in 1998, had fallen ill in the winter of 1999 and died shortly afterwards in March 2000. In his 1981 President's report to the annual general meeting of PACE, Buttedahl had written with confidence, "This has been a good solid year for PACE" (Quinn, 1988, p. 26). He left the presidency on a high note. He noted that one of the year's major achievements was a reaffirmation of the PACE mission as an umbrella organization both for adult educators across the province and for more specialized organizations in the field. Twenty years later—at the time he was serving the final year of his second term—he was fighting to keep PACE from imploding. If the future was bright in 1954 and still hopeful in 1972, there seemed to be no future at all in 2000. The Pacific Association for Continuing Education was wrapping up its affairs and disbanding its membership. As an association for adult educators, it had outlived its usefulness and no longer served a viable purpose, or so its final board members had reluctantly agreed. Times had
changed, and adult education was vastly different in 2000 than in 1954 or 1972 or 1981; it was time to move on. Buttedahl attended his final meeting of the PACE board in February 2000, where those in attendance agreed upon the wording of a notice to be sent to the general membership regarding the demise of PACE. There were only the details left to attend to.

But Buttedahl did not live long enough to see the process through to the end. Among the papers donated by PACE board members who participated in this study is a notice dated May 2000, an invitation to attend a memorial service. The notice shows a photograph, like the Kidd one, with Buttedahl's image in black and white, the result of a photocopy. But the time and the circumstances were different. The invitation was sent out by Helena Fehr, the acting President. She was considerably younger than most of the preceding Presidents and only the second woman to assume the presidency, one of the new generation of adult educators. This was the way it was supposed to be. At the time that Knute Buttedahl was serving his first term as PACE President, Gordon Selman, another founding member and past President himself, had decided that it was time for him to step aside and "[let] the younger people take over" (Selman, 1994, p. 116). And so here they were finally! But Fehr's primary duty as acting President was to finish off the organization she had participated in with such enthusiasm over the past few years. She called the final meetings and signed the official papers. PACE had become a relic, a well intentioned association of a bygone era.
On a website called the Wayback Machine (http://www.archive.org) you can find a vast archive of website history. A search for PACE reveals the two final iterations of the PACE website, May 2000 and October 2000. Although the website does not actually function anymore, the archive preserves the site as it looked in its final days. You can click around and have a look at the site’s main pages. According to a 1999 report to the board from PACE’s website coordinator, the site deliberately takes a humble tone and appearance—“a modest format that allows widespread access and avoids glitzy content that makes you wait for the turn of the century/millennium to download it.” The site is typically mid-1990s in its look and feel: bland, text-based with few if any graphics, little colour, and little of anything else. This is the site I remember when in the late 1990s I was working at the Open Learning Agency and seeking out a professional association that could speak to the kind of work I was doing at the time—working in education but not teaching, part of the post-secondary system but not on a traditional campus-based college or university. Although I hardly knew it at the time, I was thick in the territory of adult education and the Open Learning Agency represented an institution that in many ways was officially dedicated to the promotion and success of adult education. I never joined PACE but as I became more entrenched in the field I do remember that PACE seemed broad enough to include people like myself who didn’t know exactly where they fit in the grand scheme of things. There was something attractive about that.
Clicking through the final website is a little like diving through the hollow hull of an old shipwreck. Click on the members link and it takes you to a page that boldly announces in an oversized bold font: MEMBERS MAKE IT HAPPEN!

But by October 2000, the last time the site was archived, there were no more members. PACE was gone, living only in the name of the bursary—its financial legacy—that had been transferred to Literacy BC, a dilapidated website, and the fond memories of its members.

**Background to the study**

The focus of my thesis emerged from a larger study called *Revitalizing Adult Education*. The idea for such a study came originally from Gordon Selman, who had been considering what to do with the rich archival materials he had accumulated over the course of his career. This was the challenge taken up by Dr. Shauna Butterwick and Dr. Anita Bonson, who began working on the project in early 2003. I entered the scene as a research assistant later that year. *Revitalizing Adult Education* is an investigation into the history of key adult education organizations in B.C. with particular attention given to the leadership role voluntary adult education organizations in B.C. played in response to emerging issues and government policies that affected the provision of and access to adult education. The Pacific Association for Continuing Education (PACE) and the B.C. Division of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) served
as the starting points in seeking to discover important insights into the development of future adult education organizations.

The Revitalizing Adult Education project has been funded by donations from Gordon Selman, Professor Emeritus, UBC Adult Education Program and the CAROLD Institute for the Advancement of Citizenship in Social Change, an organization devoted to furthering the understanding of voluntary action organizations in Canada. As well, in the academic year 2004-2005 I received a graduate student mentorship grant from the University of British Columbia, which greatly aided in the completion of my study. In May 2005, Shauna, Anita, and I presented our preliminary findings at the annual conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Our findings seemed to resonate with those who attended our session, providing further validation that this study had something to offer to adult educators.

**Purpose of the study**

This study attempts to determine the social and cultural conditions under which PACE members struggled to come to terms with the changes in their field. As well it seeks to reveal PACE from the perspective of its membership by taking into consideration the busy lives of the individuals who were active in the organization, recognizing that PACE was just one aspect of the diverse and complex character of adult education with which its members identified.

The history of PACE in its final years and the reasons for its decline and dissolution represent an ongoing dilemma for adult educators about their place as
educators and professionals in a field of practice. PACE reveals how self-proclaimed adult educators attempted to define themselves and their field, only to agree to disagree. This raises interesting questions about the nature of adult education and the identity of its practitioners. Therefore, this study seeks to combine an historical overview of the period in question with more in-depth analysis of the perceptions of PACE members as the organization began to dwindle. As a result, I wish to address the challenges and problems that members faced within PACE and how they responded to those against the backdrop of adult education in BC in the 1990s. People who participated in my interviews recall the 1990s as a period of significant change for adult educators in a number of ways. What were those changes, and how did PACE respond to them?

PACE is not a new subject for adult education history. Its origins have been documented (Selman, 1994; Quinn, 1988) and it has been described within the context of other contemporary adult education organizations (Buttedahl, 1986). Yet, as Crowley (1988) maintains, “the irony of the historian’s craft is that its practitioners always know that their efforts are but contributions to an unending process” (p. 5). I hope this study to become a complement to these previous studies but also to take into consideration some of the developments in adult education history as well. Much of North American adult education history is a catalogue of small but important victories that deserve to be told in the interests of “fighting the good fight.” This is certainly true for Canadian adult
education history and is the story told in foundations and adult education history courses (Welton, 1998). What is currently written of PACE itself is largely portrayed in this manner. But it is an incomplete story; the omissions have much to tell. For example, historical analyses like Faris's *The Passionate Educators* (1971) reveal that adult education history is fraught with tensions and conflicts and sometimes with moments when the players were as likely to throw up their hands in despair as rise to another challenge. If an historical consciousness is based only on celebratory aspects of past events and people, then the discipline lacks a certain maturity and becomes limited by its own insecurities (Stubblefield, 1988).

At the same time, the field of adult education has been criticized for not spending enough time on its history, an effort which has the promise to develop a common sense of purpose (Pittman, 1989). This study looks at a moment in adult education history that is bittersweet, a hard decision that people felt had to be made for the good of all concerned. This does not mitigate the importance of the study in any way. Rather, it hopes to add to the diversity of viewpoints and accounts that define the history of adult education and with this it is hoped that a clearer definition of adult education might emerge as well as a clearer direction for its adherents.

In our technology-infatuated and fast-paced Western world, adult educators might console themselves as fulfilling the role of democratic society's shepherds, guiding individuals in times of change and uncertainty through the
provision of educational and learning opportunities in a vast array of environments and circumstances (Jarvis, 1995). This study wrestles with the idea that adult educators themselves, not their charges—that is, adult learners—were faced with the challenge to adapt to changes in society. The question to address, then, is whether PACE members failed to adapt and were compelled to resign themselves to the overwhelming pressures of the market and political economies of the late 20th century, or whether in fact they made the appropriate decision in declaring an end to an organization that was formed under vastly different circumstances. Whether PACE’s demise is regarded as a failure to adapt or an appropriate response to the times is critical to considering any future organization that proposes to help define the character of adult education through its membership and vision.

In this study I argue that members of PACE, a professional adult education association, found themselves at a crossroads that brought together a number of challenges and dilemmas. In the face of such challenges, they struggled to support their own association. Their ability to commit to an active adult education organization was compromised by the circumstances that are more commonly regarded as issues for those whom adult educators are used to serving—i.e., adults as learners and workers struggling to adjust to the changing and often conflicting demands of a society caught between prevailing ideologies related to work and learning and those institutions and organizations that seek to
develop visions, policies, and programs to support those ideologies. The struggle of these adult educators to define their roles as professionals united by common ideals and intentions contributed to a reflective process that in fact lasted throughout the entire existence of PACE from before its very foundations to its final moments when the last few members agreed to dissolve the association.

This is also a study about the history of adult education and its value to those who live and work in the field. Adult educators stand to benefit from a greater historical consciousness, to know what difficulties adult educators faced in the past, what successes they enjoyed and how they managed to continue to achieve their aims. In this study, I hope to contribute to an awareness of the foundations of adult education but I also wish to make that awareness a subject of my study by seeking to divine the major traditions or worldviews that pervaded the membership of PACE in its final years.

**Research questions**

My overarching research question was to ask what happened to PACE during its final years and how this related to the context of adult education and adult educators in BC. The question is double edged in that it seeks to address the fact that PACE enjoyed good times as a voluntary adult education association; as a result, a wide range of people who considered themselves adult educators were drawn to join up, participate and identify with the PACE's mission. Yet, as time passed, PACE seemed to lose its staying power. When membership numbers dwindled and participation declined, its more dedicated members began to
question its effectiveness and ultimately its *raison d'être*. Eventually, they agreed to bring PACE to a close. What changed over time for these perceptions to switch so drastically? In trying to discover some answers to this question, this study seeks to address a few specific themes:

- What was PACE’s contribution to adult and continuing education in BC in the late 1980s and 1990s? What role did it play in the province during this time?
- How did PACE members see themselves in the context of BC adult education?
- What was the value of PACE membership to the identity of those individuals who were part of the organization?
- What did members see as the successes and challenges of PACE?
- What brought on the final demise of PACE and how did it occur?
- What did the future of adult education look like in the 1990s as members discussed the fate of their professional organization?
- Is there room for adult education organizations like PACE today? If so, how would one be formed? What would its mandate be? Who would it include? Who would it serve?

**Some assumptions**

People participate in voluntary associations for various reasons, but in general they expect some sort of reward for their efforts in working on the board,
attending meetings, and taking part in a range of activities. An organization, then, would be vulnerable to failure if its members felt there was an imbalance between participation and reward. This study assumes that PACE members did feel an imbalance and sought to redress it during the course of its history.

As an organization, PACE represented a presence in the cultural fabric of Canadian society, a place where adult educators could associate amongst themselves as well as somewhere its members participated as adult learners. The success of adult education in the world depends upon spaces and places where individuals can gather, connect, organize, and learn from each other. The dissolution of PACE does not mean these spaces no longer exist, but they change. Therefore, the decade of the 1990s perhaps represents a critical moment in the history of adult education when it was clear that conditions had changed, and those circumstances that were conducive to the conception of adult education organizations in BC in the 1950s and the forming of PACE in the 1970s no longer applied. The uncertainty upon beginning this study was in knowing what had changed, and further what would need to change for adult educators if they were to form an organization for themselves in today’s world.

**Organization of the thesis**

The rest of this thesis is structured to provide an historical examination of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education against the background of the field of adult education in British Columbia. Chapter 2: Adult educators and their associations in BC, serves as a broad literature review. In the chapter, I discuss some
of the major themes that provide a framework for looking at PACE. The next chapter, *Adult education history as method*, describes how I carried out this study, following an historical method of research to develop the main themes and narrative of this study. As part of this methodology, I describe the sources used for the study along with their strengths and limitations. Details about the interviews conducted and how they are used in this thesis are also included.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 focus on the history of PACE. This history stretches back to the years leading up to the formation of PACE and continues up until the association’s final moments in 2000. PACE’s history is necessarily a story of change. In many ways, PACE’s dissolution marked the end of an important era in Canadian adult education. It is therefore important to go back to the beginnings to develop an historical consciousness of the field and identify themes that will reappear throughout the rest of PACE’s history. In these three chapters, I consider some of the major themes that characterized the association, its membership, and the field of adult education.

The final chapter, *Learning Our Way Back*, is the concluding discussion of my study. It functions partly as an epilogue to the story of PACE’s rise and fall. As well, I briefly explore the state of adult education as a field through the eyes of some of its more committed participants. Despite challenges that continue to characterize the field, I seek to return to another tradition in adult education, that of hope.
Chapter 2: Professional Adult Educators and Associations, their Roles and Identities

This historical analysis of the final years of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education concerns the intentions and actions of a group of adult educators who found themselves tasked with determining the future direction of an association that had fallen on hard times. This unhappy situation seemed a long way off from PACE’s optimistic beginnings in the early 1970s, as well as from the tradition of adult education associations that stretched back even further in time in British Columbia. The decision to disband PACE was not taken lightly and was handled with careful deliberation and seriousness by its members. Yet it is worth remembering at the beginning of this study that PACE was not simply a professional association but also one that depended on members in a voluntary capacity. Consequently, any study of the history of an association like PACE needs to acknowledge the literature of voluntary organizations as well as that of adult education in order to shed light on questions of membership and identity, motivation, and the general management of a voluntary association.

From this general look at voluntary associations, I then turn my attention to the nature of associations in the field of adult education. This is because there is a considerable body of knowledge on voluntary and professional associations already set within the context of adult education and from the point of view of adult educators as members. As well, the question of membership in a
professional adult education association is inextricably tied to the image of the field itself. This image, which is controversial, depends to a great extent on the ideological traditions that have vied to define the field and have resulted in the formation and character of numerous adult education associations over the past hundred years.

**Participation in voluntary associations**

Research on membership and participation in various social movements offers useful explanations for why individuals join, remain with, and leave voluntary associations. Studies by Skopcol (2002) and Putnam (2000) identify trends of declining voluntary participation in traditional voluntary organizations, revealing a transformation in the nature of participation in civil society. These studies are of interest and have relevance for this study in the sense that they consider the importance of participation and motivation and their relationship with identity, but they are very broad studies and are limited by their strong American perspectives.

As McAdam and Paulsen (1995) found in their study of activists in the 1960s, what encouraged and maintained participation in voluntary organizations was "a strong subjective identification with a particular identity, reinforced by organizational and individual ties" (their emphasis, p. 659). They found that their subjects maintained participation when motivation was closely aligned with the movement of the organization in question. As well, collective action is most successful when the political opportunity for power and accomplishment is
evident and within the grasp of those leading a social movement (Tarrow, 1994). These two driving forces—the individual motivation and the attraction to activism and advocacy—are useful in considering the well being of PACE over the years from its beginnings to the years when its own power and influence went into decline.

Also worth considering is the question of privilege in relation to participation in voluntary organizations, which has been regarded as a dilemma that adult educators have yet to resolve (Welton, 1993; Podeschi, 1986). PACE’s genesis resulted in a relatively quick squeezing out of the representatives of the voluntary sector, which had been part of earlier manifestations of adult education associations in the 1940s and 1950s. Heaney (1996) notes that adult education’s broad umbrella often brings together those who are in natural conflict because of their political and social positions and at the same time can exclude those whose aims might be similar. Looking at adult education history over the past century in the United States, Heaney argues that professional adult educators have become separated by what he calls “educator/activists who promote social change” (para. 140) and by the profession’s tendency to serve the interests of institutionally driven forms of education. By the time PACE was formed, its membership—particularly the leadership of the organization—consisted largely of institutionally based professionals, predominantly men, with growing credibility and influence in their field and place of employment. Beder (1987) identifies this as a fundamental
change in adult education, as the influence of Lindeman waned while that of Knowles gained ascendancy. Yet this foundational shift in membership right at the very beginning of PACE's existence toward a professional elite was critical to its ability to gather momentum in its early years, as adult educators gained not only in numbers but status as well. As a result, PACE sought to influence public policy in the area of adult education not through grassroots action but from the position of a well informed and connected organization that could speak on behalf of not just adult educators but of adult learners as well. With regard to PACE's membership, the issue of voluntary participation becomes closely tied to the debate in adult education about whether it is part of a social movement or whether it is more effectively considered a profession, as I discuss later in this chapter.

A consistent element in the scholarship on voluntary associations and participation is the relationship between learning and change and the ability of both members and their organizations to cope with and survive through periods of significant change. In order to do this, an organization requires the capacity to adapt to and initiate change for its members. This involves encouraging a culture of reflection and self examination of its own fundamental principles and its raison d'être (Senge, 1994; Watkins and Marsick, 1993). Such a process clearly occurred in the final years of PACE, and with perhaps less urgency in earlier years. However, rather than the expected outcome of adapting to and surviving changing times,
members chose the decisive action of disbanding the organization. While such a move would in most cases be regarded as evidence of failure to adapt (Argyris and Schon, 1978), this does not take into account the intricate complexities of such a decision, nor can it be considered outside the context of PACE's own history and the historical developments in adult education in BC over the past fifty years. Learning, after all, not only impacts individuals but also changes the organization itself in terms of its structure, vision, direction, and activities, as well as its very existence (Watkins and Marsick, 1993; Kim, 1993).

However, what studies such as the ones mentioned above fail to address are the unique elements in an adult education association where issues of identity and motivation are directly relevant to the underlying traditions and ideologies that help to define the field. As the literature of adult education clearly demonstrates, the 1990s consisted of a turbulent period in its own history, a time that included and encouraged spirited debate about the direction and status of adult education (Hansman and Sissel, 2001; Hayes and Wilson, 2000; Grace, 1997; Scott, Spencer, and Thomas, 1998; Brockett and Galbraith, 1992; Quigley, 1989). For this reason, I have made it a priority of this study to consider the well-being of the diverse and conflicting field of adult education through the lens of this single voluntary association of professional adult educators.

Membership in the field of adult education

Adult education lies at the heart of societal change. Yet the role that adult educators play in that change is subject to considerable debate. For some, adult
education serves to prepare individuals to formulate a set of responses to the
demands of society in an ever-changing world. Others would argue that it is itself
a force of change that sets society on a particular direction. Both points of view,
nonetheless, imply a need for adult educators to have the requisite knowledge and
skills to meet these divergent responsibilities. Whether adult educators subscribe
to one or the other view or a mixture of both, it is clear that the history of adult
education is imbued with the notion of change and how it affects the lives of
individuals.

Because this study is concerned with the stories behind the decline of a
local adult education association and the decision by its members to formally
dissolve that association, the divergence of ideologies on the nature of adult
education is essential to understanding the rise and fall of the Pacific Association
for Continuing Education in its historical context. As a result, it is important to
consider PACE as not only a professional association for adult educators but also
as an association of professionals in the role of adult learners seeking to adapt to
changing conditions in their immediate social, political, and economic contexts.
In this way, the history of PACE’s final years represents a dual perspective on the
nature of adult education in British Columbia at the end of the 20th century: first,
by viewing the history of PACE in the broader context of adult education in
North America over the past 40 years, we are able to see the changes in how self-
styled professionals sought and continue to seek an identity for themselves in a
field that has undergone significant shifts in its epistemological and intellectual orientation (Scott, 1998, Collins, 1998, Heaney, 2000); second, by considering the adult educators who formed PACE as adult learners, it may be possible to understand more clearly how the techno-rational hegemony of lifelong learning developed from the time of the founding of PACE and exerted pressures that contributed to the inability of the membership to continue in an organization modeled on ideas that were formed under quite different circumstances.

Developing an identity for adult educators

Because one’s association with a field is tied closely with one’s understanding of what that field represents, this study considers the very notion of a definition of adult education, for its history shows that there is no easy answer to this question. Moreover, what is put forth as a definition or what is used to describe the defining elements of adult education is subject to considerable debate. Yet, despite the many conflicting views that combine to create a picture of adult education, people continue to be drawn to the field for one reason or another and are able to find meaning within it. This study of the history of PACE, therefore, involves a collection of perspectives that is central to the question of ‘what is adult education?’

A definition of adult education?

One’s conception of what adult education purports to represent largely depends on how one views the field from a philosophical perspective. From there it is easier to see from where practice emerges and what the critical elements are
for carrying out such a practice. As Courtney argues (1989), defining adult education is “an ideological more than a conceptual activity” (p. 23). That is, adult educators constantly look to their intentions before their practices when seeking to define the field with which they associate—a view of what they hope to achieve rather than what they are actually doing. In this study I examine definitions of adult education from both perspectives, ideological and conceptual, through the words and deeds of those who participated in an organization where a commonality of identity once existed among the membership but gradually came apart as time passed and conditions and contexts changed.

From andragogy to lifelong learning to adult education permanent, attempting to define adult education is to risk becoming mired in a morass of buzzwords, neologisms, and red-herrings. Some of these words and phrases have more meaning than others, while some rely on their greater marketability or memorability; mostly it is just confusing (Apps, 1979; Campbell, 1977). In seeking to provide a clearer statement on the aims and purposes of adult education, Eduard Lindeman began by acknowledging that the field as he saw it in the 1920s was in a state of “muddled confusion,” not in just the public perception of the field but from within as well. Malcolm Knowles (1977) refined this interpretation by offering the confusion up as a positive aspect when he termed it a “patternless mosaic of pluralistic aims”—in effect, something for everyone. While this interpretation does little to resolve the discrepancies of philosophy, it does allow
for a high tolerance for contradiction within the field and welcomes inclusion over exclusion. Gordon Selman’s description of adult education as the *Invisible Giant* (1988) gave an apt image for the field and ably identified at once its greatest strength and most debilitating weakness, but it only served to capture the nebulousness of adult education rather than articulate a defining feature that everyone could rally around. This debate over the definition of adult education, which began in the early part of the last century, has only resulted in further disagreement with time. Over the past 15 years, various publications have raised the question of adult education’s purpose and future directions (Quigley, 1989; Galbraith and Sisco, 1992; Hansman and Sissel, 2001). However, not only has that question remained unresolved but the positions taken seem to have become even more entrenched. If there is anything we can conclude from these discussions, it is that adult education is best understood through its differences rather than its commonalities. And at the centre of this storm of controversy stands the one common element, the adult learner.

*Two predominant perspectives on adult education*

Perhaps then it is better to discuss a tradition of adult education and identify abiding features that have meaning for those who seek an understanding of its definition and nature. There are at least two presently held views on where adult education draws its character. The first acknowledges that adult education has found its place—it has achieved credibility in the university as a professional field (Knowles, 1982; Campbell, 1977), tucked away in the corner of Education.
faculties merrily churning out professional trainers, teachers, and program planners and possessed of a sound body of knowledge that can be passed on to those who seek to become better at what they do, which is to educate adults. This is an opinion that has gained more and more currency in the past 40 years. The other opinion, the more somber if not bitter view, sees adult education as having lost its way from its noble tradition as a guiding light of social movements. In this view, the rug has been pulled out from under the guardians of adult education by a range of enemies. In the rogues gallery of saboteurs that have been identified you will find the marketplace (Gouthro, 2002; Welton, 1995), Thatcherism (Martin, 2003; Taylor, 1997), neo-liberal privatization (Cruickshank, 2002), corporate globalization (Rubenson, 2002), infatuation with technology (Welton, 1996; Conrad, 2003), human capital theory (Collins, 1998a), human resource development (Fenwick, 1998), and, perhaps worst of all, those “sharp-eyed careerists” (Thomas, 1957, p. 4) who have been unable to recognize their own responsibility as part of the problem of an adult education practice that appears to support the status quo rather than challenge it (Cunningham, 1993). All of these have been distracting adult educators from their more valuable roles as agents of change towards a more just and equitable society.

**Adult education as a social movement**

Adult education has its historical roots in the area of social reform, and its early proponents regarded the field as inherently sociological in its orientation, with adult education serving as the starting point for social change. Adult
education was meant to represent not a collection of individual learners but rather a collective effort of learners working in concert to improve their lives as well as the general well being of society. In this view, bettering one’s lot in life did not come at the expense of others but was an intention of greater social improvement. This interpretation of adult education was that of a “mass movement of reform” (Laidlaw, 1971 cited in Selman, 1995, p. 24). Perhaps the clearest and most comprehensive exposition of this view comes from Eduard Lindeman whose classic text *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926) sought to provide a philosophical grounding for adult education. According to Lindeman, learning is not in preparation for life; it is inextricably tied to the act of living itself. Adult education therefore must bring together the short-term goals of self-improvement with the long-term vision of social reform and changing history. Although this interpretation is currently subordinate to that of the professionalism image of adult education, it is not entirely forgotten. Indeed, there are adult educators today who identify most strongly with Lindeman’s definitions of adult education (Briton, 1998; Brookfield, 1987). At the same time, it is regarded as an idea of a past era, whether or not it is still relevant today. If there is a desire for a social reform revival of adult education, it is inspired almost exclusively by the victories of the past rather than the promise of the future; it is a lost tradition in need of rediscovery.
Selman (1995) attributes the loss of this tradition to several factors, including the rise of professionalization in the field:

*It is generally agreed that adult education as a field of practice has in recent decades been transforming itself from a field of practice to a more professionalized field. That is to say, whereas at one time adult education was inspired and to a large degree led by people who saw the field as a means of bringing about social change, with professionalization it has largely relinquished such goals and has concentrated to providing services to individuals on demand. Thus the field has gone from having an agenda of its own (social change or improvement) to what is more typical of the current period: leaving to the learner decisions about the use to which learning will be put (p. 3).*

Adopting a position embodying the principles of earlier interpretations of adult education is in confrontation with the current predominant thinking about adult education and risks alienating those who have embraced the ideas of learner-centredness in their practice and have welcomed professionalization as a good thing. That is, learners who emerge from today’s political and cultural environment may see an effort toward social change as in defiance of their individual learning needs.

In the Canadian context, Welton (1998) sees the period from 1920 to the end of the 1950s as the golden era of Canadian adult education, when “Canadian adult education crystallize[d] around a central purpose: to foster participatory citizenship... the secret of the Canadian tradition of adult education lies in its civil societarian focus” (p. 39). Selman (1998) recounts some of the highlights of citizenship education in Canada: Frontier College, the Antigonish Movement,
National Farm Radio, Citizen's Forum, and the NFB's Film Circuits. In Canadian adult education, these are the greatest hits. But ultimately it appears that the thread running through these efforts has run out, or has it? If not, it is at least the case that decrying the absence of the social movement aspect of adult education has become as much a characteristic of the field as the movement itself (Grace, 1998).

Welton (1998a) even goes so far as to suggest that this yearning for adult education as the setting for deliberative democracy runs so deep that it has upset the professionalization trend because of the lingering doubts in adult educators who have paused to consider the field's historical roots. Yet, contemporary adult educators admit that it would indeed be hard to imagine the membership of any adult education association to approve, unanimously no less, the adoption of the 1943 Manifesto of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (Selman, 1995). The position is forthright and unequivocal, the language of social and political activism unabashed in the language, and the ideals lofty and unimpeded by concern for the economic imperatives of the day. Consider the language of the CAAE's principles as expressed in the Manifesto:

*The Canadian Association for Adult Education confronting the challenge of world events, in its annual convention of May, 1943, desires to affirm its stand in regard to the basic issues of the crisis and to call upon all interested individuals and groups to share with the Association the urgent educational task of creating and strengthening those attitudes and understandings upon which a new Canadian and world society can be founded.*
The C.A.A.E. believes that in this day of total war and total challenge, academic aloofness and neutrality are not enough and that it is obliged to declare itself categorically upon those basic issues of human principle which underlie the social and economic, and spiritual problems of our times.

The C.A.A.E. therefore affirms its adherence to the following principles:

a) The principle of total and mutual responsibility -- of each for all and all for each -- both as between persons and as between nations. This must be made operative even towards the criminal or underprivileged individual and the guilty or underprivileged nation.

b) Social controls and planning are a necessary expression of this sense of social responsibility. Planning need not necessarily involve governmental ownership of, control over, or active interference with, economic enterprises. Nevertheless, it is probable that the area of public ownership and control should be extended in those enterprises most essential to human welfare, and where individual enterprise is unable or unwilling operate in the public interest. It is still more desirable that the area of voluntary co-operative activity in every field should be increased.

c) Human beings are ends not means. Planning must be combined with such local and community participation and democratic vigilance as to prevent the regimentation and frustration of the human personality. Social efficiency and social security are not ends in themselves but are for the sake of human dignity and personal fulfilment.

d) Efficient service to the community, and not social privilege, financial power or property rights, should determine the status of the individual.

e) The greater importance of consumption over production as the determining factor in economic activity must be re-asserted. Consumption goals, such as meeting decent standards of nutrition and housing, should be the main incentive of economic life.

f) Social goals take precedence over individual and sectional purposes of profit or advantage. This principle asserts itself in time of war and must be maintained for the winning of the peace. Great
collective purposes of social security, world nutrition, slum clearance, reforestation, soil conservation etc., are emphatically necessary as binding forces uniting our people, motivating economic life, and giving dynamic content to planning and to the effort after full employment.

g) Neither the old individualism nor the newer mass-collectivism but a relationship of voluntary co-operation, which balances rights with responsibilities, is the basic pattern of the emergent social order. Such a relationship of voluntary co-operation has a place for central planning and control as well as for the legitimate liberties and enterprises of the individual. In the international sphere it supports the obligations of a collective system for defence and for the maintenance of world peace.

The C.A.A.E. will seek the co-operation of all individuals and organisations who endorse these principles in formulating and executing a whole-hearted campaign of public education directed towards the winning of a people’s war and a people’s peace.

(CAAE Manifesto, 1943)

The manifesto speaks undeniably to a particular political constituency that has not been achieved since in the history of the field (Selman, 1983). It is anything but an acquiescence to the status quo or a reactive stance to learning and participation in society.

But a current reading of the manifesto reveals how remote the sentiment is, something to be proud of but largely removed from the practice of adult education as we see it today, a terminal moment in history. While times have moved on, some adult educators feel stuck in the past, reluctant to let go of a time when adult education seemed just right (Welton, 1996). When Campbell (1977) stated his case for the recognition of the professionalization of adult education as the right and proper direction for the field, he casually dismissed its
social movement aspect as little more than the enthusiasms of a few out-moded and ill-equipped volunteers, even suggesting that such a leaning contained a hint of incompetence (p. 26). Verner (in Campbell, 1977) summed up Campbell's argument for a professional education around adult education as "irrefutable" (p. vii) as though the subject were finally past debate, leaving the 1950s behind as a period "in which adult education lost much of its amateur status" (Wilson cited in Selman, 1986, p. 64). This is not true, of course. The debate rages on. As Cunningham (2000) argues, the strength of adult education as a social movement rests not on the methods and techniques that were employed to some end of social reform but in discovering the end itself, which in her opinion has been largely omitted from the histories of adult education.

**The professionalization of adult education**

Running counter to the notion of adult education as a social movement is the spectre of professionalization. One of the major themes that runs through the history of adult education in North America is the desire and effort of adult educators to create a respected voice for themselves as both an academic discipline and a field of practice. These efforts have led for the most part to a professional legitimacy and status that are rooted in the university, with graduate programs designed to produce new generations of professionals for adult education and maintaining the university as the headquarters for the development of a body of knowledge supported by research and theory. These are all contributing factors to the idea of an adult educator identity. However, the notion
of such an identity against the backdrop of a professional field has been perhaps
the most vexing question in adult education's history. Reflecting on the historical
development of a professional identity for adult educators, Wilson (2001) laments
the disproportionate emphasis given to technical proficiency over any sort of
political acumen or ethical considerations and argues that the ideology of
professionalization constitutes an incomplete definition of an adult educator.
While Wilson's focus is on the development of the American adult educator,
many parallels can be seen in the Canadian context as well. Collins (1994a, 1994b)
traces the professionalizing tendency of adult education back to the 1950s, a time
when others see adult education finally coming into its own. Even today many
adult educators look to visionaries like Eduard Lindeman in the United States or
R. H. Tawney from Great Britain to inspire their conceptions of the field and its
social mission. I have already described Lindeman's influence on the
development of adult education as a field. Tawney, an Oxford educated academic
who served for many years on the executive of the Workers Education
Association in the early part of the twentieth century also exerted considerable
influence on the idea of adult education for a time (Smith, 2005). Tawney
promoted the liberal education idea of society as a fellowship of learners and
spent his career arguing that adult education was the key to democratic
citizenship (Elsey, 1987). These were lofty ideals to be sure but they were seen as
viable goals for society and were put into practice by their proponents whose lives offered models for action.

Yet on university campuses, adult education was gaining more and more recognition as a professional discipline. The work of academics such as Houle (1956) and Jensen, Liveright, and Hallenbeck (1964) helped define the characteristics of the field. Others such as Campbell (1977) also saw the social reform aspect of adult education not only as a drain but also as a distraction from its more valuable role in society. As a result, according to Collins (1994a), adult education as a social movement became “sidelined” to its present status as radical or out of step with the prevailing ideology.

It is interesting to note that this feeling of rancour has itself a long history going back to the time when adult education was in its professional infancy. In 1926, Lindeman had already warned that an overemphasis on technical or “mechanical” specialization was not the right direction for adult education; that adult educators needed to maintain a broader focus and remain mindful of the “what” of learning, not just the “how.” Nonetheless, contemporary trends indicate that the direction was heading the other way. For example, Wilson (2001) points out that the American Association for Adult Education (AAAAE), which was founded in 1926, made professionalization one of its core elements and exemplified the intentions of similar organizations as precisely the environment where professionalization was most effectively promoted. Faris (1977) describes
similar tensions among adult educators on the Canadian scene in his history of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), while Thomas (1959) warns of the threats to the adult education movement just as it was beginning to gather some momentum.

Despite its current dominance in adult education today, there are many who regard professionalization as the wrong path (Collins 1991, 1994b, 1998; Welton, 1995) and even as an "aberration" (Heaney, 2000), as though it is only a matter of time before practitioners and professionals will once again be able to see eye to eye and unite behind a common purpose for adult education. Others, however, argue that professionalization is a fact of life in adult education and it is up to those in the field to set the tone for what makes a professional, a discussion that hopes to include the divergent views that have too often led to indecision instead of identity (Imel et al., 2000; Brockett, 1991; Grace, 1998). A third view seeks to dismiss the dichotomous aspect of this disagreement and favours an attempt to redefine adult education in a way that tries to incorporate positive elements of both interpretations (Heaney, 1996; Wilson, 2001; Mezirow, 1985).

One of the troubles with the professionalizing tendency, both in the university and out in the community of practice, is the charge that adult education’s professional status has brought no guarantees of any kind (Damer, 1995; Collins, 1994b). Practitioners are not bound by the discipline even to identify themselves within it the way a doctor or lawyer would. Neither can the
university guarantee that graduates of an adult education program will enjoy the privileges of a profession, which by its very nature, aspires to elitism. The status enjoyed by the members of a recognized profession may be achievable by ambitious and capable individuals in the wide open battleground of the marketplace but not as a rule. As Collins (1994b) writes:

*External conditions and forces shaping the destiny of the field do not afford modern adult education practice, even in its most secure institutional settings, the guarantees and privileges of a profession (pg. 131).*

**Theoretical considerations in the history of adult education traditions**

In considering the dismantling of PACE and the passing of an era in the history of adult education, if not the shifting of a paradigm, it has been helpful to view PACE's turn in history through the lens of a critical theoretical perspective of adult education. As Welton (1995) points out, the field of adult education in the late 1990s can be regarded as in a state of crisis. In the critical perspective the culprits as described earlier in this chapter are accompanied by a much greater internal threat—i.e., the theoretical underpinnings of the field itself, primarily in the form of andragogy, which is, according to critical theory, driven by the technorational hegemony of oppressors—i.e. government, industry, large-scale organizations and bureaucracies. The result is a movement that is lost, without a worthwhile philosophical foundation and bullied into a state of powerlessness. The decision by adult educators to dissolve their professional organizations in this very same period could be seen as a manifestation of lost hope. Critical adult
educators naturally look to the descriptions and definitions provided by earlier writers like Lindeman and Tawney for inspiration and sustenance and so regard the great moments of adult education history as milestones in their history—Frontier College, the Antigonish Movement, the early work of the CAAE, the National Film Board, the Manitoba Wheat Pool, and so on. They regard the increased emphasis on professionalization as an abomination and consider the notion of adult educators as professional experts of learning to be a serious betrayal of the original spirit of adult education.

Also attractive from this critical perspective is the idea that adult education is less a psychological phenomenon and instead deserves a more sociological treatment. In this way, we can look to a voluntary association like PACE as an environment of adult learning, with the educators taking up the role of adult learners seeking to resolve the issues that were presented to them as members of the adult education community during a time of great change and anxiety for the entire field.

Critical theorists argue that individuals are constrained by oppressive systems and organizations into working, thinking, and living under the yoke of technorationality and instrumental knowledge—i.e., developing skills to conform to the existing order of work and learning. In this way, adult education is not about democratic citizenship or social improvement but about the tools and techniques needed by educators to promote the status quo. At the same time,
attributes like empowerment or enlightenment are constrained by these systems. The result is the prevention of individual fulfillment and the fragmentation and limitation of society as a collective enterprise. Such oppression creates a false consciousness of the highly subjective reality of the individual—in adult education, by way of extension, serving the learner's needs becomes the driving force of adult education, whether or not those learning endeavours will serve to reinforce conditions of oppression and inequality. In this scenario "oppressive society recreates itself" (Welton, 1995, p. 22). Not only are learners blinded by this grand network of false consciousness, but the problem is perpetuated by adult educators who, as adult learners themselves, are caught up in the same illusion of freedom and independence.

Adult education in theory and in practice
Taking a look at the field from a broad view over 40 years of research and practice, it is apparent that over time practitioners have become taken up by the increasing demands imposed upon them by labour market forces and commandeered by economic urgencies to use adult education as an enabling mechanism for increasing employment growth and productivity in the workplace. In the first half of the last century, adult education was a phenomenon that largely grew apart from the parallel growth of vocational education. The emphasis was on socially based activities with learners more closely pursuing recreational rather than career goals (Rachal, 1989; Campbell, 1977). By the 1950s, these two movements began to merge, with vocational education overwhelming other
forms of adult and continuing education in the institutions in a trend that has lasted till the present day. Along with this increase in focus on vocational education and job training went the strong presence of technology and its effects on the world of work and education. In this new world, adult educators faced challenges to adjust to various effects of technology. These effects ranged from retraining in the face of technological change to preparing workers for the knowledge economy to addressing the growing gap between those privileged with the power of technology in their careers to those without such power.

Perhaps most importantly, the accelerated pace of technological change in society swept along adult educators to confront their own status as learners in the now dominant view of the worker as vulnerable and dispensable, a victim of lifelong learning more than a beneficiary. Adult educators themselves were compelled to maintain their own currency as skilled operators of educational techniques and devices and purveyors of a new pedagogical orientation that incorporated and even promoted the unquestioned use of technology not only for the purposes of working but for learning as well. This approach to adult education, as the implementation of a government sponsored and employer sanctioned brand of lifelong learning, is quite different from the hallowed tradition of Canadian adult education, with such organizations and movements as the Women’s Institutes, the Wheat Pool, Farm Radio Forum, the Antigonish Movement, and Frontier College, all of which were also closely associated with
the world of work and concerned with educating adults as workers, but which took the broader view of the adult learner in a democratic society rooted in active communities (Collins, 1989). Determining where the current and predominant view of adult education joins up with the previous tradition is one of the aims of this study. By looking at the membership of a single professional adult education organization in the Pacific Association for Continuing Education, I seek to determine how these two strands of Canadian adult education wove themselves together in the character and mission of PACE.

This ongoing labour-focused direction was necessarily reflected in the type of research being done in the academic world of adult education (Rachal, 1989; Rubenson, 2000) but it also suggests that adult educators were having their wishes granted to be considered the resident experts and knowledge purveyors of learning. By the 1990s it was not uncommon for new books on the subject of learning and the workplace to enter the realm of popular appeal, with its own set of learning organization gurus and high-powered motivational speakers. Best selling publications like *The Learning Organization* by Peter Senge, or *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey dominated the shelves. But was this adult education? Were Senge and Covey the latest great names in a knowledge tradition that had gained earlier fame with such names as Paolo Freire and Malcolm Knowles or even Roby Kidd? What is the connection between a continually adaptable, highly productive workforce and what Moses Coady
referred to as the ultimate goal of adult education, “the good and abundant life” (p. 68)? It’s easy to see the field at once broadening in scope and thinning out to the point of creating breaks in the perimeter of its own domain.

However, at this point, it is also worth considering whether there has been a growing disjuncture between academic faculty and the community of practitioners they help to educate in graduate programs in adult education. As Rubenson (2000) notes:

Recognising that adult education has firmly remained a practical discipline, it is worth noting that the renewal of faculty is pushing the field in a more theoretical direction. While a large number of the early faculty members in university departments of adult education were recruited on the basis of considerable experience within the field, recent professors are hired more on the basis of academic backgrounds and bring with them scholarly traditions (para. 24).

The result of such a development has been a widening gap between professors and practitioners of adult education. What is perhaps most disconcerting about this is that it appears to be a commonly recognized state of affairs by professors themselves (Griffith, 1989; Pittman, 1989).

From the academic perspective, Sork’s (2002) study of adult education faculty reveals the broader issues that continue to influence the field. In particular, what he discovers is that the tension between those concerned with social reform on the one hand and those concerned with the professionalization of the field on the other seemed to undergo a significant transformation during the 1980s and 1990s, precisely the same time that adult education organizations like PACE and
the CAAE in Canada found themselves scrambling for both adequate funding and a basic *raison d'être*. As Sork points out, although many adult education faculty had developed their commitment to the social purposes of adult education during the days of 1960s activism, they seemed to have lost the battle in their later years with the rise of neo-conservative movements that began to dominate the political landscape in the 1980s and 1990s.

Sork's study also reveals that students are coming to adult education departments for different reasons and with different motivations. This speaks to a broad system-wide change. As a result, it follows that organizations formed to represent not just adult learners but adult education professionals would find themselves struggling to find a common meaning from among their own memberships.

*Professionalization and the university*

Grosjean (1998) asks whether those in the university—the professionals—are themselves to blame for this crisis, and he concludes that indeed the responsibility lies in the faculties of adult education. To borrow the medical metaphor that Grosjean employs, not only did these faculties fail to recognize the early symptoms of delegitimation throughout the 1980s and 1990s, but they have failed to act now that the ailment has been diagnosed. To add insult to injury, Grosjean contends, even the language of adult education has been appropriated to serve the interests of the neo-liberal power brokers of today's market economy. The most notorious example of this, among many, is perhaps
lifelong learning, which has been translated, or "hijacked" (Boshier, 2000), from its earlier vision to its more current understanding. Originally lifelong learning was conceived to support democratic activity by citizens for self and social improvement (Selman, 1991). The idea of change has never been far from the concept of lifelong learning and it was adult educators in an organization like PACE who sought to define the term for the wider public as the need "to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to live with any sense of confidence in a society that seems destined to undergo continuing radical changes, at an ever accelerating pace" (Niemie, 1974, p. 7). However, as the term gained wider currency it became swept up by the tide of globalization where learners as workers live desperately in a state of deficiency, vulnerable to change and ultimately responsible for their own failure to "keep up" in a ruthless economic environment (Learning a Living, 2001). As one government official has stated:

It is an important issue if Canadians want to progress. We need to reach out to as many partners and organizations as possible in that respect. We need to pursue globalization and competitiveness, and in order to meet that challenge we need to keep up our skills.

(NODE Networking, 1999)

Grosjean wonders whether "the 'social movement' tradition in adult education has been trampled in the rush to professionalization and the tendency to think increasingly of the delivery of expert services to individuals" (para 12). And if this is the case, what are adult educators doing about it and how has this trend impacted their own sense of identity? On the other hand, others would
argue that this tension between professionalization and social reform is simply evidence of the ongoing development of the field—one that has gradually moved in orientation from the idealistic to the practical (Knowles and Klevins, 1982). This is regarded not as a downward slope of forgetting one’s past as adult educators, but a positive development toward a complex and mature social system of adult education comprised of participants with a range of knowledge and experience (Peters and Kozoll, 1980).

**Professionalization and adult education associations**

This entire debate of professionalization pitted against social reform may seem to be irrelevant to the practitioner in the field such as a facilitator of a job-finding club, a literacy instructor, an organizational program planner, a corporate trainer, a community activist or any other kind of adult educator. However, if we consider the relationship between a profession and its membership, then the issue of professionalization has more resonance. A profession naturally brings together the conceptions of theory and practice to any field and serves as the middle ground between the creation of knowledge and the application of knowledge to some usable end (McGuire, 1992). As Brockett (1991) has argued, following the ideas of Schon (1987) on the nature of professional adult educators, developing a professional sense of self is critical to contributing to the broader identity of adult education as a field of study and practice. What is needed, according to Brockett, is a working philosophy of adult education that incorporates critical reflection and a deep commitment to the goals of the field. This argument addresses more
directly the issue of *professionalism* in adult education, which seeks to support the individual’s pursuit of excellence as an adult educator, rather than *professionalization*, which reflects a trend in the social status of adult educators and their organizations that is in its most negative manifestation a culture of expertise. The history of PACE does offer a glimpse into the process of professionalization seen in this relatively positive and progressive light, as a trend that enabled an environment—in the form of a professional association—to occur where practitioners from a diverse range of backgrounds could meet to discuss common concerns of the field and to establish a sense of community. Establishing a point of unity is one of the primary purposes of an adult education association as Brockett argues elsewhere (1989). This idea conforms to Houle’s (1980) views on the more fundamental reasons for an adult education association as a place and space to provide fellowship and community as well as attain professional status. Without the underlying unity offered to adult educators, further concerted actions such as policy formation and advocacy are in vain.

**Adult educators and their associations**

The status of professional associations serves as a useful barometer for measuring the health of the profession they purport to serve, in this case adult education. By their nature, professional associations exist to legitimize the professionalism of their membership, and changes in these associations necessarily reflect the changing needs and directions of the members. Adult educators have traditionally seen a close correlation between the health of
professional organizations at different levels and the health of the adult education field in general, even suggesting that one cannot exist without the other (Smith, Eyre, and Miller, 1982). Professional associations also serve as a useful starting point from which to explore notions of a collective identity for adult educators (Griffith, 1989). The connection between adult educators and their associations and their importance within the field is reflected in Schroeder's (1980) typology of adult education systems, which identifies four types of leadership systems within the field of adult education:

- government
- private foundations
- graduate departments
- professional associations

According to Schroeder, the wide ranging field of adult education is governed by these leadership systems, which form a network through which all adult education activities flow in some capacity, either through programmed experiences for learners or opportunities and meeting points for educators.

This study considers some of the connections between these leadership systems with a particular focus on PACE, as a professional association, and the University of British Columbia as the main source for graduate students. I use the interviews to explore the idea that the professional field of adult education employed these leadership systems to establish itself in society and was supported
by these systems through a network of adult educators who moved easily from one system to another.

The question of leadership is also of interest at a much more fundamental and personal level for participation in an adult education association. Indeed, leadership within the field has been seen as one of the major benefits of participation in these associations (Shelton and Spikes, 1991). As with any voluntary association, membership provides multiple benefits: to the member, to the association itself and to the field in general. What do these associations provide for adult educators? Some of the benefits are typical: publications, conferences, networking opportunities. Shelton and Spikes argue that the primary benefit is the opportunity to take on a leadership role. It only follows that if there is no one willing to take on the leadership, then there is little hope for the membership in general and the survival of the association is bound to be in jeopardy without this higher level of participation. Tied to the idea of leadership development is that of mentoring and the passing on of the torch from generation to generation. Especially an organization with a rich history should be able to offer valuable mentoring possibilities as its membership crosses generations. This does seem to have been the case with PACE and has been discussed in the existing history of PACE (Selman, 1994) as an important aspect of its well being.
Griffith (1980) argues that because adult educators have traditionally existed on the margins, they looked to associations to draw strength and influence from their numbers. This search for like-minded individuals to support newly defined positions in some narrow sector of the adult education field partially explains the tendency to establish associations. The inability to act as authorized representatives of their employing institutions limits the discussions and decisions of members of adult education organizations to commitments they can make as individuals. Lacking the authority to commit their institutions to any plan of action, adult educators can only discuss the need for or advantages of coordinated approaches; they cannot pledge their institution’s resources to any joint agreements. Coordination among institutions can only be brought about by including top administrators or their official representatives in the process. Because adult education programs are only a small part of most parent institutions, the chief administrators of the institutions do not typically belong to adult education organizations, which tend, in turn, to emerge and grow in response to the perceived lack of power of the member adult educators (pp. 83-84).

This is not necessarily the case with PACE, which originally drew its executive members from leading administrators in the post secondary system in BC. However, as time passed, PACE presidents and board members no longer came from this group and as a result there was some noticeable loss of influence and indeed well being.

Spikes (1989) discusses some of the aims of adult education associations and offers a model for such an organization. As he indicates in his survey of adult education associations in the United States, there has rarely been a moment in the past century when adult educators were not willing to get together and form a
group for themselves to further their interests or develop a voice for themselves. However, it is less clear whether the frequency of forming associations represents a strength among adult educators or is evidence of indecision in the nature of the association that is formed (Brockett, 1989). To investigate this question, Jensen (1960) proposed three basic aims of an adult education association. These three aims are useful in assessing the general well being of an organization like PACE over the years as it changed in scope, direction, and purpose. Jensen was thinking of an adult education association on the national level, but his three aims still resonate for more regional groups as well:

- Create greater public awareness of the role and importance of adult education in national life;
- Encourage the development of a large core of highly competent adult education practitioners;
- Extend and deepen the knowledge about the theory, methods, and organizations of adult education (p. 192).

**The need for identity among adult educators in professional associations**

Wilson (2001) argues that in order for the profession of the adult educator to survive, and indeed thrive, it is necessary to come to an accepted and established identity. Without a common understanding of what makes an adult educator, the profession is doomed to failure, and as a result any sort of association of adult educators cannot last:
I do believe it is no historical accident, for example, that various adult education professional associations have collapsed periodically, which I believe partially results from a lack of any substantial professional identity (p. 76).

If there is an overemphasis on technical competency, then what is lost? Wilson and Cervero (2001) have argued that adult educators must take on a political and cultural dimension to their identity:

*There is no politically innocent place for adult educators. At the heart of practice, then, we must clearly understand that every adult educator is a social activist* (para. 8).

This brings us back to the question of who chooses to be identified as an adult educator and what organization best represents her or his interests in that regard and then, by extension, what happened in the case of PACE. Is such an aspect of identity defined by one's professional capacity or by one's activities in society? One of PACE's challenges as a broadly based association was that it sought to appeal to the activist and the professional without excluding either or dismissing the notion that individuals could accommodate both profiles in the same identity of adult educator.

**Division or diversity?**

The foregoing review of the main themes underpinning the nature of adult education gives an impression of conflict, indecision, confusion, and fragmentation. As Grace (1999) has shown, a defining feature of adult education in North America has been its diverse and often divisive nature. This tension reveals itself in adult education associations as Faris (1977) demonstrates in his
study of the early years of the CAAE. Yet against this conflicting background is
the struggle of adult educators to achieve quite the opposite effect: harmony,
decisiveness, clarity, and unity.

Professional associations for much of the past century have served as one
of the main arenas for this struggle and their histories reveal much about the
nature of adult education and the philosophical foundations that have directed
the field for so many years. In this way, professional associations have much to
say about the state of adult education as well as providing a window into the
world of individual adult educators and their motivations and intentions.
Chapter 3: Adult Education History as Method

My work for this thesis began as part of a larger study into the decline of adult education associations in British Columbia, with a particular interest in the history of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education and the Canadian Association for Adult Education. The combination of a chance meeting with Dr. Shauna Butterwick at the Vancouver Public Library on a rainy evening in January 2004, along with a slowly moving train that blocked the traffic along Venables Street in East Vancouver as I cadged a ride home resulted in my involvement as a research assistant on the project called Revitalizing Adult Education. Not long after joining the two co-investigators on the project, Dr. Shauna Butterwick and Dr. Anita Bonson, I quickly became intrigued by the historical aspect of the Revitalizing study as well as the stories that were told to me as I participated in my first interviews. After a trip to meet Gordon and Mary Selman at their home on Bowen Island where we spent the afternoon talking about the history of adult education and Gordon’s early career experiences on the BC adult education scene, I was hooked.

As I considered the context of adult education in British Columbia from the 1950s to the present day, I found myself increasingly drawn to the transformation of the field as viewed through the lens of the history of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education. PACE provided an interesting focal point
for my explorations into BC adult education history. It was an association that brought together several important strands useful in conducting an analytical description of the field. Although its history officially began in 1972, the desire to form a broadly based adult education association had been gathering momentum for some time before that.

Many of PACE’s founding members kept up their involvement over the course of its 30-year history. They have a unique perspective to bring to the story of PACE. At the same time, PACE was an organization that constantly sought to reinvigorate itself with new members and to carry on some of the grander aims of adult education. These people, too, were important to contact, for their perspectives on PACE and on adult education broadly had been formed at different times than those of their predecessors. Thus, my study is also an attempt to capture some of these perspectives, to record their stories, and to consider how the great debates of the field manifested themselves in an organization comprising those who associated most closely to it.

**Making adult education history**

Gordon Selman, one of the pre-eminent historians of adult education in Canada, was nevertheless admittedly self conscious about of the enormity and potential futility of his task as one who invested his career in interpreting the field through its historical development. According to Selman (1995), one of adult education’s defining characteristics was its untidiness:
One of the most striking characteristics of adult education as a field is its diversity and the fact that it is so widely dispersed throughout society, much of it in the private sector and virtually invisible to the casual observer. It is far from a tidy enterprise, which is at once a problem and a source of strength. Indeed it might be argued that a tidy mind is a distinct disability in dealing with the subject (p. 15).

If admitting then that the possession of an untidy mind avails me of some limited potential as a student of history, then I believe that this study does have something to offer, if nothing more than further consolation to future historians of this unwieldy and protean subject.

Given its incredible diversity, adult education is a field that finds itself perpetually in doubt, as to its essential nature, its mission, its purpose, its theoretical and philosophical foundations, and its way forward. A history of such a field is largely a narrative of doubts, uncertainties, paradoxes, and contradictions. Because this is an historical study in the field, my strategy was to proceed thematically, with a loose chronological frame. It is continually important to reconsider views and perspectives as PACE's history unfolds, for nothing seems to stay in place for very long.

It is incumbent upon a field for those within it to pause frequently to take its pulse, to consider its successes and failures and to gauge its progress. As well, shedding light on historical developments in the tradition of adult education has significance for the well being of its membership. As Gordon Selman writes in an introduction to one of his many historical articles on adult education in British Columbia (Selman, 1969):
The account may be of special interest to those who have entered the field of adult education recently—or will do so in the future—and may wish to have some appreciation of where we have come from and by what means we reached the present stage of our development (p. 1).

This statement is no less important than it was when Selman wrote it 35 years ago.

My study also investigates the nature of adult education history in Canada and particularly in BC, which has its own incredibly rich stories to tell. When considering the tradition of adult education and the events that have occurred to give the field its character and sense of being, we need to address the issue raised by the British writer and adult educator Raymond Williams. Is adult education simply a reflection of the times and of social events, “the bottle with the message in it, bobbing on the tides and waves of history” (Williams, 1989, p. 157)? Or is there more depth to this field, indeed, a desire not merely to adjust to history but to shape it as well, to play an important if not central role in the events that help define and change society and to step up and assert rather than accept its own destiny? This can only be determined by knowing more about those who identify with the field itself, those who in their multitude of ways end up defining the aims, direction, and various implementations of adult education. For, as Williams states, this is the more important question:

Nevertheless I think the true dignity of its history is not to be found in what it was influenced by, although of course being so often marginal, precarious and underfunded, it was continually influenced in this or that direction—momentarily encouraged, often thwarted.
Its dignity is in the more general sense that it kept this ambition to be something other than the consequence of change and to become part of its process (p. 157).

An historical analysis of any subject of inquiry will necessarily take into account both the centrifugal and centripedal forces in play, for each is crucial to the question of an adult education identity (Kidd, 1979).

Making an historical study readable, not to mention comprehensible, involves what the Roman writer Lucian refers to as creating “the charm of order” (quoted in Morton, 1988, p. 97), a term that assumes one is working with something less than orderly to begin with. Crowley (1988) defines history as “the attempt to recreate and explain the significant features of the past on the basis of fragmentary and imperfect evidence” (p. 5). The rest of this chapter describes some of the fragments and imperfections I worked with and considers the process of bringing these elements together in an attempt to achieve something approaching a charm of order. Such a process involves what Morton refers to as the “trinity” of the historical method: selection, arrangement, and narrative.

Selection involves the determination of information to be considered in one’s research. This includes the formation of research questions and the development of a direction or focus for the research. It is something of a bumpy ride for the researcher, as the focus is apt to change and the subject to be studied “begins to form, dissolve, and reform in the researcher’s mind” (p. 101). Morton is content to regard this process as a pleasant mystery.
The process of arrangement is less inscrutable perhaps, consisting of analysis, and the outlining and prioritizing of themes. Wiersma (1991), who describes a very similar methodological process for educational historical research, breaks this step into two stages—evaluation and synthesis—but like Morton insists that there is much overlap in the activities of selection, gathering, analysis, and synthesis. By this time, the researcher is working with the information needed to create the history, but there are still many decisions and judgements to be made about how themes deserve to be treated and what place they take in the study. As this is happening, necessarily the researcher is developing a narrative, but the brunt of one’s effort is on the analysis. In my experience, the process of arrangement involved not only the consideration of archival materials and documented sources but also the content of the interviews that were conducted for this study. I discuss these sources later in the chapter but it is interesting to note that they are all useful as so-called imperfect fragments in creating a sense of the whole. For example, materials that are used in this study include minutes, newsletters, correspondence, and documents produced by PACE in its official capacity as a publisher. Each type of material tells a different story about PACE. The same can be said for the interviews that were conducted, both from the perspective of the interview participants and the interviewers as I explain below. Each of these sources, then, consists of its own window into the past, none of them completely transparent but each contributing both as a source
of information and something to be considered in its own right (Gidley, 2004; Howell and Prevenier, 2001).

Finally, according to Morton, “a narrative must march” (p. 102). As the writer of this thesis, I can only hope that my readers do not think the ground too muddy to proceed with much difficulty. Part of the trick of the narrative is in using the data and available sources of information to give some life to the story of PACE. This involves a combination of “as much luck and insight as evidence to grasp the bits of truth that are revealed” (Brown, 1988, p. 160). In this study, I tried to use quotations from the interviews to give a greater immediacy to the data and allow the voices of interview participants to speak for themselves.

**Discussion of interviews**

*I like history because my reading of it is accompanied by the comforting certainty that all the people I meet in its pages are dead.*

*(CF Lloyd quoted in Kidd, 1979, p. 12)*

This sentiment is certainly not true, least of all in my case as one who made it a point to get out and meet many of the people who appear in this history with the sense of relief that they were far from dead and instead living their rich lives and telling interesting and valuable stories about the past, their involvement with PACE, and their ongoing relationship with the field of adult education. As a result, this study depends profoundly on the stories told in the interviews and how they are able to shed light on the events of PACE’s history and the feelings and intentions that lay behind those events.
Because this study began as part of the larger, more broadly conceived *Revitalizing Adult Education* project, our interview participants were not limited to PACE members. This turned out to be a positive aspect of this study as it contributed to the richness of perspectives. It was useful to gain a sense of PACE's character, not only from those who participated as active members towards the end of its life, but also from those who had been involved from its early days and those who, while not members, had made different associations with PACE whether through government or other adult education organizations. At the same time, for the purposes of my study, some of the interview participants had more to say that was particularly relevant to the case of PACE. Others—for example, Alan Thomas—were not affiliated with PACE but their close association with the CAAE and their involvement and interest in adult education in Canada and in British Columbia made their reflections very worthwhile to the study even if they do not get quoted with the same frequency as some of the other participants.

For the *Revitalizing* project, we interviewed 26 individuals from February 2004 to August 2005. These participants represented a good range of active adult educators on the BC scene over the past 50 years. Because some of these individuals chose to remain anonymous in this study I had to devise a way for including their contributions without disclosing their identity. For a study with an historical focus, it did not seem effective to go the route of pseudonyms, so I
have adopted a simple system of attribution. When I have quoted someone I cite their name and the paragraph number of the interview transcripts. For those who have chosen to remain anonymous I cite them as “interview participant” along with a number to distinguish that person from other anonymous participants.

For the purposes of my study and the particular focus on PACE activities, the interview participants can be loosely categorized as follows:

**Table 3.1: Interview participants and interviewers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of participant</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Interviewers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PACE Board members at the time of disbandment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dave: 6 \  Anita: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier PACE board members, (including 4 past presidents)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dave: 6 \  Anita: 2 \  Shauna: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult educators, not members of PACE, but who nevertheless had some type of connection to professional adult education associations in Canada.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dave: 3 \  Shauna: 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions to the interview participants focused on their entry into the field of adult education and their involvement with adult education organizations, particularly the CAAE and PACE. We were interested in knowing what sorts of roles participants played as adult educators over the course of their careers.

Specific questions included:
• What were the circumstances of the emergence of these organizations?
• What was the organizational structure?
• What was the mandate and vision of these organizations? Who were the key players?
• What role did you play in this organization?
• What kind of leadership role did these organizations provide for the field?
• Whose interests were represented in their activities?
• How did these organizations recruit members?
• What advocacy, lobbying and other functions did they undertake?
• What were some of the key issues being addressed?
• What were their successes and challenges?
• What lessons can be learned that would facilitate the revitalization of a voluntary adult education organization?
• What issues in adult education are of key importance at this time?

However, as I began to focus my study more specifically on the history of PACE and the experience of PACE members regarding the survival of their organization, I pursued a slightly different path than the original study had intended. I focused less on the lessons learned aspect of the Revitalizing Adult Education project and more on an exploration of events and actions that occurred
in response to PACE members' attempts to re-interpret the field of adult education through their organization.

**One history, many histories**

The history of PACE as an organization is bound inextricably with the histories of its members, each one working itself into the larger fabric. PACE's membership was diverse, composed of individuals with widely different backgrounds and career trajectories, not to mention various and even sometimes contradictory visions on the nature of PACE's own mission—the departing old guard, the next generational leadership, the freelance consultant seeking a network of professional companionship, the campus-based administrator dealing with the pressures of the new economy of the 1980s and 1990s, the harried program coordinator resisting the charge of cost-recovery based continuing education, to name a few. These personal histories are part of PACE's story as well. In this way, the history of PACE's final years becomes a close-up view of professional adult education—the practitioners and the purveyors—as the field looked in southwestern British Columbia in the last decade of the twentieth century. Consequently, interview questions were designed to probe the subject of the identity of adult educators and to consider the notion of a professional organization being representative of its membership, as a type of collective consciousness.

The vast majority of those interviewed for this study offered preliminary apologies. The remark by one of PACE's early members, Nick Rubidge, is typical:
NR: Sure. You know, my memory on this, the history here, is really hazy. It's a long time.

DS: That's what everyone says at the beginning.

NR: I can hardly remember anything.

DS: Well, we'll see what we can get out of you.

NR: This is the '70s, for God's sake!

(Nick Rubidge, 2-6)

Such apologies were part of the story telling in these interviews. There were two main kinds. The first, poor memory, was a natural misgiving from an individual standpoint, disclaiming any detailed knowledge about a time in one's life that is unquestionably only a small part of the much larger story of one's past. The second type of apology was in direct contrast to the first but served as a telling complement. That is, participants invariably digressed from the narrow strictures imposed by the theme of the study—the decline and dissolution of PACE. Participants found themselves as members of PACE, an organization in anxious circumstances, but then they were off—geographically, professionally, philosophically heading somewhere else as PACE continued to unravel and their association with it diminished. They may have pondered out loud the reasons for the dissolution of PACE and so theorized the state of adult education as it looked from their uniquely personal perspectives. In contrast to the first apology, this second apology in effect disclaimed the abundance of memory as it was revealed in these interviews.
**Analysis of data**

Because of my interest in the stories of the adult educators who were part of PACE’s history, my approach to this study is an interpretative one. As Briton (1996) notes, this gives a study a distinct character: “As opposed to purportedly value-free, positivist research programs, interpretive modes of inquiry are explicitly value laden,” with the goal of the research being “understanding, not prediction and control” (p. 80). As a result, although it was helpful to work from a consistent framework of specific themes to explore, such as identity, one’s role in the organization, one’s entry to adult education, key challenges for the organization, etc., the interviews did not follow a strict regime of questions in a particular order. The intention was certainly the opposite—that is, to use the questions as entry points to a more wide ranging discussion about adult education and the fortunes of PACE as they related to the field and how they affected the participants’ positions as adult educators.

Kohler Riessman (2002) identifies the dilemma that seems to plague all researchers who rely on interviews: what to do with all those digressions, tangents, off-topic rants, and the wonderful stories that compel the interviewee to stop suddenly and blurt out “Now, how did I get on to this?” But, Kohler Riessman maintains, this is the very stuff of the research:

*They underscore the gap between the standard practice of research interviewing on the one side and the life world of naturally occurring conversation and social interaction on the other* (p. 700).
This approach is now commonplace in qualitative research. It is also worth bearing in mind that the subject under study by the researcher is bound to be only a part of any individual's experience. In the case of PACE, it is an adult education organization that took up the spare time of busy professionals who came from a diversity of backgrounds and interests. Descriptions of how it fit into everyone's life and how it comes across from each individual's perspective were variable from interview to interview. One person has a problem with the university's role in the organization and becomes fixed on that, another recounts struggling in her career at the time, so her view of PACE is seen through that lens, yet another sees herself as a younger person lacking in confidence and perhaps not acting as she might today. As such, the narratives that are elicited from the interviewees necessarily result in skewed and incomplete details of the full portrait of PACE. It is important, then, to consider all these details together to gain a better sense of the larger picture.

*My position as researcher*

Our interviews were carried out in a variety of settings, from cafes and restaurants to institutional settings (offices, connecting via telephone) and private homes. In addition, these interviews were carried out by three investigators, all of whom had different relationships with the study participants, ranging from total strangers to close friends, and who themselves had quite different or wide ranging approaches to conducting interviews for the purposes of research.
Shauna, being a seasoned researcher with a personal connection to many of the study participants, was also a former member of PACE herself and an active participant in many voluntary adult education associations. She not only brought an interest to the historical aspects of the Revitalizing study, but she had worked and studied with many of the participants who were interviewed. In the interviews there is a palpable sense that Shauna is interviewing friends and colleagues. This enabled her to take the discussion in directions that might not have been possible for someone without her background and association with the interview participants.

Anita Bonson is a University of British Columbia education graduate (in both adult education and history) and although not a member of PACE she personally knew many of the board members who were interviewed. Like Shauna, she was able to establish a rapport with her interviewees through their shared experiences of the past, both in the context of PACE and UBC. Both Anita and Shauna were graduate students who had studied with Gordon Selman, one of the principal resources for this study, both from his historical works and as an interview participant.

This was quite different from my experience as an interviewer for this study. I entered these interviews very much as the inquiring graduate student, something of an outsider but also rooted in institutionally based professional practice as an employee of a post secondary institute in British Columbia. I was
also often able to relate my working background to various subjects raised in the interviews. For those interviewees who had spent their careers in post secondary institutes there was considerable discussion on the role of adult educators vis a vis the system of post secondary education. Participants offered examples of one subject or another based on our shared understanding of institutions, whether that understanding involved a recognition of a particular way of knowing or elicited a dry cynicism regarding the irrational consistencies embedded in large bureaucratic organizations.

Moreover, my role as a graduate student also indirectly became partly embedded in some of the discussions. Some participants felt it important to clarify their opinions of the university, UBC in particular, knowing that I was a student there and again knowledgeable of the people and practices that are part of UBC’s adult education programs. However, rather than see these as limitations of this study, I regard these different profiles of the principal researchers and their associations with the interview participants as a contributing factor in the richness of the data as provided in the interviews.

As I described earlier in this chapter, I became attached to this project owing to a combination of happenstance and piqued interest based on my earlier interests in adult education history and my tentative association with professional adult education organizations in BC. Although I joined a project proposed and defined, with a few interviews already conducted, my initial interview experiences
and readings into local adult education history, largely from the writings of Gordon Selman, lead me in directions that deviated from—although without abandoning—the original intentions of the project.

Based on my review of the literature in combination with the first few interviews, emerging themes quickly changed my focus of this study from that of advocacy activities within organizations like PACE and CAAE to questions of membership in the organizations and even more fundamentally identity within the field of adult education. From initial interviews, I determined that questions of identity and membership were at the root of the theoretical debate that goes to the heart of adult education. New questions, then, emerged from the initial efforts of the study: Why bother joining this association at all? What did one hope to achieve by being a member? Advocacy was part of the answer to this but only a part. There was more to the story. There were intentions of the organization itself, being part of a community, doing good work, staying in touch or rubbing shoulders with respected names, friends helping friends. Of course, with study participants there was hardly a routine consensus of opinion on the various aspects of membership in PACE and the purpose of the organization. As a result, I found that each time I performed a systematic reading through the transcripts of the interviews, I discovered new categories or sub-categories with which to establish the dominant themes of this study.
**Other source materials**

Apart from the interviews, I made use of some of the archival materials at my disposal, including PACE publications like newsletters and the *PACE Papers*, correspondence, and PACE program information (announcements, schedules, etc.). Many of these materials were made available through Paul Dampier's estate, and they were invaluable in enabling me to review the published work of PACE. Other materials were provided by many of our interview participants, who generously offered what they had saved of their files on PACE. Early on in my involvement in the larger study of *Revitalizing Adult Education*, one of the co-investigators, Anita Bonson, had conducted some preliminary research into the early history of PACE using archival materials from the collections of Paul Dampier and Gordon Selman (Bonson, 2004). Anita's research was instrumental in helping me reconstruct the chronological developments of the events leading to the foundation of PACE, which forms the first half of Chapter 4. Particularly invaluable were the notes jotted by Gordon Selman in the margins of minutes that Anita recorded, which shed light on some of the motivations behind the events of the 1960s, as adult educators came ever closer to defining an organizational profile for themselves.

For information on the PACE bursary, I found Eric Damer's commissioned history of PACE (Damer, 1998) to be invaluable. Damer provided not only a useful chronology of events about the bursary, from its very beginnings to its then-current status in the late 1990s, but his analysis of the
reasons behind the success of the PACE bursary resonated with my own interpretations about what inspired members to see the organization as the rightful representation of adult education in its broadest sense of the term as both ‘friends helping friends’ and as a domain of committed professionals.

Finally, Chapter 6 is heavily dependent on the minutes of the final two years to develop a sense of the progression of events as PACE ground to a halt. Comparing the discussions evidenced by the minutes with interview accounts of the later days of PACE was most interesting for developing a contrast between people’s memories, which seemed to suggest that PACE moved inexorably toward its demise, and the minutes, which gave a much different impression about the well being of the organization, suggesting that the end was never in sight until only very late in its history. Another invaluable document during this period came from Bill Day’s research, which he generously shared with me during our interview. In 1997, the PACE board under then-president Marilyn McLaren struck the Future Directions Committee, whose mandate was to carry out research in order to come up with a policy recommendation regarding PACE’s future. Day’s study, which he presented to the board in the spring of 1998, provided a useful counterpoint to this current study in that he focused exclusively on those who had left PACE or let their membership lapse in an attempt to determine reasons for the decline in membership during the 1990s. My study, by
way of contrast, focuses on those who stayed with PACE and remained committed to it till the very end.

**Divining themes from the history**

As I worked on my interviews with the study participants, I became less interested in the traditional blow-by-blow account of the final decade of PACE and much more intrigued by two prevailing themes:

- the connection between the life of this rather modest and regional association of adult educators and those who comprised its membership—their lives and professional aspirations as intersecting moments in the great story of adult education in BC and Canada; and

- the dominant, overriding themes that described the character of the field as illustrated by the impressions, actions, and intentions of the adult educators who shared their stories in the interview process.

In this way, my study attempts to provide a perspective of adult education within the parameters of time (1970s to the present) and place (BC, Canada) and space (adult education, professionalization).

When considering the decisions of PACE members to dissolve their own association and reflecting on their reasons for doing so against the background of competing philosophies of adult education, it became obvious that most
practitioners of adult education do not fall decisively on one side of the ideological fence or the other. In the question of adult education as a social movement and the professionalization of the field—a continual bone of contention in adult education—I came to realize that PACE members embodied qualities from both traditions without evidence of contradiction. The question of where adult educators stood on the question of their identity was not a simple one. By extension, PACE’s own character seemed to reflect the multiple personalities, so to speak, or orientations, of adult education. This didn’t necessarily reflect disorder, but rather a complexity and intricacy of character that was often inscrutable to individual members and to myself as researcher and historical inquirer.

**Establishing an historical context to the interviews**

From an historical viewpoint, it became important not only to investigate the final years of PACE, but also to go further back in time to gain a clearer sense of the historical and philosophical circumstances that led to the formation of PACE from its earlier incarnations in the BC Council of Adult Education and the BC Chapter of the CAAE. Making an historical re-evaluation of the early years of PACE and the adult education scene in BC in the 1950s proved helpful in gaining a better understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the field and the reasons for the polemical writings of the 1990s in the emergence of a critical theory of adult education. This, in turn, prompted me to return to the adult education literature to investigate questions of identity from a critical theoretical
perspective, offering a framework that contributed to a much clearer understanding of the difficulties faced by adult educators in both carrying on as members of a flagging organization and as adult educators and learners struggling to find meaning in their association.

The next chapter, therefore, takes up the story in the relatively young years of adult education in British Columbia, as I seek to discover the events and players that contributed to the formation of PACE. At the same time, I explore the question of formation from the point of view of individuals, revealing how many adult educators came to find themselves in the field and then subsequently in an organization that purported to represent both their interests and aims as adult educators.
Chapter 4: Formations in an Emerging Profession

The Pacific Association for Continuing Education and the quest for an adult educator identity

The Pacific Association for Continuing Education was the culmination of considerable activity on the part of adult educators interested in forming a professional association for themselves at the provincial level at a time when adult education was gaining a foothold in the consciousness of society not only as a new direction in education generally but also as an incredible growth industry for the institutions that were to govern its implementation. As opportunities for adult learners became more widespread and organized and as the professional class of adult educators began to assume positions of power within the public school system, higher education, community development, and government, there began to be a growing need to form an organization of adult educators working on behalf of learners in a wide variety of contexts. In this way, the formation of PACE represents a critical point when what had begun as an often “far-flung and unco-ordinated” enterprise (Selman, 1977, p. 1) achieved a sense of cohesiveness and coherence.

This study does not provide a narrative of PACE’s entire existence. Most of the focus is on the adult educators who were members of PACE and in this study I attempt to share the story of their roles as adult educators and their involvement in PACE. As well, the focus on PACE activities is restricted for the
most part to the final years of its existence, covering the decade of the 1990s. However, it is worth focusing on the years leading up to the formation of PACE in order to get a clearer sense of the circumstances that lead to its development and the intentions and actions that shaped its character over the following 30 years.

Sowing the seeds of an organization

Combined with an active group of advocates in the Department of Extension at the University of British Columbia, including John Friesen and Gordon Selman, the movement toward a more formal presence for adult educators was stirred by the influence of one of the field’s great names, Roby Kidd. Although Kidd was based in Toronto as a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto and served as the Director of the CAAE, he seems to have given considerable time and attention to the BC scene. His speech at a dinner meeting in September 1954 at the University of British Columbia on the subject of “Adult Education in British Columbia” is credited with prompting a series of discussions among various groups of adult educators, which later led to a series of semi-annual conferences on adult education (Connections, 1997, p. 1).

Pressure to organize was coming not only from the university but also from the ranks of educators in the community organizations and the public school system. School boards had been involved in adult education activities for some time, as early as the end of the previous century, and the night school
operations boards were becoming a significant component of the school boards' activities by the 1950s, if not earlier. In 1953, the Department of Education of BC established its own Community Programmes Branch, which was tasked to coordinate adult education activities throughout the province. This branch was headed by LJ (Laurie) Wallace, who also served as the Director of Night Schools during this same period. Wallace organized the first conference of night school administrators in 1955, bringing together almost 40 people from around the province to discuss and share concerns and experiences. Wallace’s vision for adult education would find hearty support from his counterparts in the universities:

There is a significant need for adult education in our democratic society today. Democracy can only be achieved in a society where the adult is an active participant in the political, social, economic, and cultural affairs of the community.

(Report of the Provincial Conference of Night School, Directors, Principals or Supervisors, 1955, quoted in Dampier, 1978, p. 11)

As the conferences, activities, and discussions increased, it became almost inevitable that educational leaders such as Wallace and Friesen, along with their colleagues and other like-minded individuals with lofty ideals about education in the service of a more democratic society, would decide to create synergies and build toward a more unified voice for adult education in BC.

These conferences later resulted in the formation of the BC Adult Education Council in 1957, the same year that Kidd was again in the province, working at UBC and teaching in Canada’s first adult education degree program
(Selman, 1977). This program was headed by Alan Thomas, another key player from the university in the activity to organize adult educators in the province during the 1950s.

The 1950s mark a period when more and more opportunities emerged for adult learners across the province, but so did opportunities for adult educators who, in the role of adult learners, wished to enhance their own skills in instruction, programming, and the organization of learning experiences. These two quite distinct though not unrelated developments came together to provide the spark for the creation of adult education associations, specifically for adult educators. Ensuring a means for participation in a democratic society may well have been at the top of the agenda for these first organizers, but the concern to bring adult educators together as working professionals informed by an academically nurtured knowledge tradition was no less prevalent in these early stages, as associations began to form. Along with the budding development of graduate programs in universities across the country, the CAAE under the direction of Roby Kidd also turned the focus to the training of adult educators as well as to contributing to the growing body of knowledge on the subject through publications, programs, and research activities.

Although the history of adult education in BC has its unique characteristics, these developments were not out of line with general trends that were emerging in the rest of the country and in the United States at the time. In
the United States, similar developments were taking place with the merging of two major adult education associations in the early part of the decade (Griffith, 1989; Knowles, 1977). The American Association of Adult Education (AAAE) represented the social movement character of the field, focusing on philosophy and publicity for adult education, whereas the more practitioner-focused National Education Association (NEA) tended to support professional development activities and government-targeted advocacy.

The ongoing dissolving and merging of different organizations suggests a desire to achieve some sort of commonality of purpose among adult educators even if that commonality was hard to define. At this time, opinion was still largely in favour of adult education as a social reform movement, but as the ranks of adult educators began to grow, the focus on professionalization gained greater currency and attention. In this way, the 1950s serve as a decade of critical transformation for adult education.

**The BC Adult Education Council**

With the founding of the BC Adult Education Council, the voice for adult education became a little more clearly defined for a short time and reflected a growing maturity of the field itself. The Council was formed through the efforts mainly of three existing units: the Vancouver School Board, the provincial government’s Department of Education (specifically the Community Programmes Branch), and the Extension Department of the University of British Columbia. The Council’s purpose was simple: to enable adult educators to stay in
touch with each other and to provide a clearinghouse of ideas (Selman, 1969). The Council was characterized by two other strong and potentially opposing motivations—a strong regional presence for adult education and a close affiliation with the CAAE at the national level. The CAAE link was seen as crucial for heightening the profile of adult educators in BC. Council members were also concerned with maintaining that philosophical link to the CAAE, as well as having a social reform agenda. Yet, at the same time, the Council members struggled to maintain a unified voice, given that there were “differences of view concerning the proper role of the Council” (Selman, 1969, p. 33).

Much of this organizing took place in the time-honoured fashion of dinner discussions and gatherings of an informal tone with a broad array of participants, all of whom had expressed an interest in this fledgling movement to create some sort of association for adult educators. These people included not just academically oriented professionals, but also volunteers, community-based practitioners, and students. However, the notion of a clearinghouse of ideas and of an umbrella group to represent adult educators from different areas of interest and concern did take hold among influential individuals who looked to the CAAE and its ambitious agenda to serve the field on the national level and with considerable public attention.

The formation of the BC Adult Education Council laid the groundwork for the development of PACE but it was by no means composed of a similar
membership, nor was the outlook the same. Something was lost by the beginning of the 1970s when PACE was formed, and the difference is found in the declining presence of the voluntary sector, as the idea of an umbrella group for adult education began to develop. PACE would be no less concerned with advocacy as its voice in adult education grew more influential, but the loss of voluntary sector participation from groups such as the Parent-Teacher Federation and the Council of Women was the result of a shift towards institutions, and particularly those of the post-secondary system, as the formation of colleges and universities dominated the educational landscape in British Columbia (Selman, 1988). This institutional association would become both a blessing and a curse for an organization like PACE and for adult education in general. It served at once to help define adult education and give it a viable presence and to restrict its membership and even perhaps exclude those who had a vested interest in maintaining close links with the profession and the concerns and activities within the field. In contrast to the notion of a clearinghouse of ideas or an umbrella membership, the formation of PACE could be regarded as a moment when adult educators decided to do just the opposite, that is “narrowing the circle of those who felt themselves to be involved in the welfare of adult education” (Selman, 1988, p. 32).

Even during its formation there were divergent reasons for joining, including the sometimes conflicting views of networking with professionals and
working towards the social goals of adult education. What is clear is that in the 1950s and 1960s, adult educators were onto something and they put considerable effort into bringing practitioners in BC together to discuss issues, learn from each other, get to know each other, and give a voice to adult education in the province. This period marks a time when the divergent traditions of adult education were entrenching themselves into the mindsets of individuals while at the same time there was a growing awareness that adult education was a force to be reckoned with in British Columbia. But what kind of force? What did it look like and how did it manifest itself in the collective actions of adult educators at the time? What was the ethos at its core that held the field together?

**Interesting vs important adult education**

Already in these years, as the experience of the BC Council demonstrates, there was a desire to establish an organization that was broadly based and could serve a liaison role among other more specifically oriented organizations. Opportunities were sought and developed for a variety of adult educators to get together to discuss issues and benefit from each other’s experience and knowledge. But was this enough? Naturally, there was a close connection to the CAAE since the major players in BC were CAAE members. In the mid 1950s, for example, the “Continuing Committee on Adult Education” consisting of some of the more active adult educators in BC at the time, including future PACE members John Friesen and Knute Buttedahl, was successful in organizing a couple of well attended conferences on adult education. The idea was to
establish an umbrella or liaison association to "support and reinforce" the actions of various organizations as well as to avoid "competition of a wasteful kind" (Kidd, cited in Selman, 1969, p. 4). However, as Selman (1969) notes, although these conferences were judged to be quite successful, "Civic and provincial organizations, especially private ones, have not the staff, and therefore do not have the time to send representatives to 'interesting' meetings. They must be 'important' ones" (pp. 10-11). Even a simple assessment such as this one goes to the heart of adult education—that is, its purpose and function. Selman's judgment that the meetings needed to be important above all else brings to mind the comments by Raymond Williams and his conviction that adult education is more than simply a "bottle with a message in it." And in making the distinction between what adult education might be and what it ought to be, Williams's language (1983) is similar to Selman's:

> The true position was, always essentially was, that the impulse to Adult Education was not only a matter of remedying deficit, making up for inadequate educational resources in the wider society, not only a case of meeting new needs of society, though those things contributed. The deepest impulse was the desire to make learning part of the process of social change itself. That was what was important about it....if one forgets that underlying intention then it becomes just one of many other institutions with an essentially different kind of history (p. 158).

**The BC Division of the Canadian Association of Adult Education**

Despite general support from the national offices for local activity, the idea of a BC Division seemed to go against the wishes of the CAAE's president at the time, Roby Kidd, (Bonson, 2004). There was concern that a BC Division
would draw attention away from the national focus of the CAAE and further concern that other provinces would follow suit, which is eventually what happened. In any case, the organization found itself in a time of transition. Kidd was stepping down from his position and the CAAE was facing financial difficulties. As a result, resistance to the idea of a provincial chapter in BC was not substantial enough to prevent it. But the provincial voice of adult education was becoming hard to ignore anyway. The University of British Columbia was at this time establishing the first graduate program in adult education while in the school boards BC represented by far the greatest presence of adult education providers among the provinces, including a participation rate in adult education programs and courses at twice the national rate (Selman, 1988). It is not surprising, then, that proponents for this development were of the belief that BC was in the lead on the adult education scene from an institutional standpoint and therefore needed its own representation while maintaining links to the national organization. Creating a provincial chapter was also seen as a way of strengthening the organization nationally and envisioning a new “unitary structure” for the CAAE. (Bonson, quoting Thomas). One result of these activities was the formation of the BC Division of the CAAE in 1962.

The Division’s existence was relatively short-lived however. The CAAE was undergoing philosophical and logistical problems of its own and trying to redefine its purpose as well as dealing with financial difficulties. This left the
provincial divisions on their own, a condition that prompted the BC Division president at the time, Dean Goard, to seek to distance the division from its national association. Goard was uncomfortable with the CAAE's social reform agenda and was concerned more practically with vocational education as the vehicle for society's betterment (Damer, 1998; Bonson, 2004). The result was a weaker BC Division during a shaky time, a growing interest in a clean break from the CAAE, and a movement toward a greater focus on adult education at the provincial level (Bonson, 2004).

Within the BC Division the disagreements about its goals and purpose were prevalent. Some believed that an adult education organization should concern itself with the state of adult education in BC; that is, recognizing the importance of adult education as a means for improving the lives of individuals and adapting to conditions related to employment and education in changing socio-economic circumstances. Others saw such an organization as instrumental in helping individuals realize their own potential to change society and resist forces of political and social oppression. This classic dichotomy of worldviews had already been well evident in the CAAE at the national level, where it was debated whether the organization should speak out as advocates on behalf of marginalized groups or work directly to help people learn their way out of oppressive circumstances through active programming.
Other adult education associations

The BC chapter of the Canadian Vocational Association (CVA) was formed in 1964, a direct result of the federal government’s interest in stimulating training (as opposed to education) activities across the country (Damer, 1998). Likewise, the BC Association of Continuing Education Administrators (BCACEA), a group consisting mostly of school board directors, came together in 1963 and broadened its scope soon after to incorporate representatives from the wider and fast-growing post-secondary system. These two professional associations, along with the BC Division of the CAAE, were to come together under one umbrella of practicing adult educators, but not before considerable discussion, compromise, and disagreements about a suitable way forward.

PACE: The best plan

Already by this time there was talk that specialization was leading to fragmentation within the field of adult education and this had some effect on the discussions about what defined an adult education organization. It is not surprising, then, that there might be some initial discomfort among the groups. Throughout the 1960s, as the community college system began to blossom, school boards in the province began to decrease their adult education operations, from a peak of about 70 in the mid-1960s to its pre-World War Two levels of 22 by the end of the decade (Selman, 1988, pp. 11-12). Gaining any sense of the important institutional players at this point must have been a little tricky when the ground was shifting so drastically.
By the mid 1960s the BC Division of the CAAE, the BC Association of Continuing Education Administrators and the BC Chapter of the Canadian Vocational Association represented three considerable influences on adult education in the province. Earlier attempts to unite these three dominant adult education organizations in BC had not been successful. Selman refers to the efforts to form a merger as “feeble” and indicative of the poor leadership on the issue at the time (Bonson, 2004). However, talks did continue and in subsequent discussions, Selman, himself one of the proponents working towards a merger, concluded that in order for such a new organization to be successful it had to recognize the distinct identities and interests of the members in the existing organizations, particularly the Adult Education Directors.

In 1971, the BC Division formally dissolved and in 1972, the Council merged with the CVA and the BC CAAE to form the BC Association of Continuing Education (BCACE), later shortened to ACE. The third organization in these discussions, the BC Continuing Education Administrators, offered moral support for the merger but chose to keep their own organization intact. The founding conference took place on April 21, 1972 when Gordon Selman was elected as the first president. Due to a technicality, the acronym ACE was deemed unavailable for the organization, so there had to be a name change. The result was the Pacific Association for Continuing Education better known as PACE and useful for all sorts of catchy puns (PACE Setter, Change of PACE).
Already at this very early stage, there was a sense of shared values but the agreements appears to have been fairly delicate. Jindra Kulich was one of those who helped found PACE, but on reflection he wonders if the alliance that was formed was complete enough to ensure future success:

At the time of the BC division of the CAAE, we thought it would be better to affiliate and become more organized and to get involved with the training of adult educators. As a result we became more professionalized and institutionalized. That was one of my biggest regrets. Now we had institutionally-based and professionally-based adult educators and we lost the voluntary people and that orientation.

(Jindra Kulich, 5)

Gordon Selman makes a similar observation:

I saw the field, or this organization, which pretended to, not so much represent because it wasn't an advocacy group in those days, but to speak to the interests of people in adult education, had come to the point of speaking to, being concerned with institutional interests mainly. And the voluntary organization people, we'd never asked them to go home, but we'd as good as done that by managing the program and running the organization in such a way that it no longer had rewards or spoke to their interests.... I guess partly because we got paid and went to the office every day and all that kind of stuff, we just somewhat, I think inadvertently, took the outfit over.

(Gordon Selman, 41-43)

These expressions of doubt do indicate that compromises were made to make an organization like PACE come together. Not everyone came away as the winners in the decision to found PACE in its eventual form. The idea that the professionals may have pushed out the volunteers in order to effect the half-baked merger of the existing organizations and so exerted themselves as was their
privilege as a more powerful group is problematic and leads to questions about professionalism itself as a force within the field of adult education. Is it salutary, a necessary means to a the greater end of doing good work in society or does it put an organization PACE at an immediate disadvantage in moving forward at the expense of creating exclusions? Selman's comment above in particular suggests that those men (and most of the early leaders were indeed men) who found themselves fully funded, employed, and influential in the world of adult and continuing education from the 1950s to the 1970s eventually garnered enough support to implement and manage an organization that was composed of mostly volunteers. Yet, people like PACE's early leaders were primary beneficiaries of the trend of professionalization as it established itself in the post-secondary education system. Michael Clague recalls that the institutional influence was something that was hard to resist, simply because the entire landscape of education was changing irresistibly in that direction:

...the field was expanding so much. Universities were expanding. Colleges were creating departments of adult education, so even if you were ecumenically minded and social movement minded, you were part of something that was being publicly institutionalized at the same time, and inevitably you'd be drawn off into the immediate responsibilities and demands of that as well.

(Michael Clague, 67)

That adult educators were in need of an organization to represent their interests and aims is not in doubt, but the union of the three pre-existing organizations was not exactly a seamless process and Selman (1972) himself
noted in a letter to the then-president of the CAAE, Donald Brundage, that PACE was indeed an organization on delicate foundations:

It is a bit complex, but it has to cope with some facts of life here at the moment, and I think it is the best plan we can devise.

Upon these foundations, PACE entered the world of adult education as the field’s organizational representative in British Columbia. Its mission and target membership would become two of its defining characteristics over the course of its 30-year existence.

**Adult educator identities and the quest for PACE**

The formation of PACE represents, in a collective sense, the philosophical wanderings of adult educators as they sought to find a place to call their own. These so-called wanderings were not resolved by any sort of formalized organization; rather a destination was established, at least for those who found their way to PACE during the course of its existence. What the interviews for this study bear out is the sense that over the course of PACE’s lifetime, particularly in its final decade, many members struggled with the essential definition of adult education as a field of practice and a discipline. Even those who were leaders in the field in the years of formation (the 1950s and 1960s) found their own vision of adult education challenged.

This feeling that adult education had somehow transformed itself so much that it became hard to know what it was anymore or where it had disappeared to comes through strongly in the interviews, particularly amongst
those who had been involved with PACE and the CAAE in its earlier days. Alan Thomas, who had been one of the main proponents of a strong independent voice for adult education in BC going back to the 1950s, suggests that it was towards the end of the 1970s when he realized that things were different:

*That's when I discovered that adult education had changed in Canada. So much that it was partly unrecognizable to me.*

(Alan Thomas, 3)

However, at the same time that adult education was becoming unrecognizable to the likes of Alan Thomas, it was still drawing in new people with a familiar message about social change and the improvement of individual lives through learning. These were the subsequent generations of adult educators and it is worth considering their own entry to the field.

*A haphazard but growing passion*

Ned Corbett once famously said he was on the road to Damascus when he fell in among the adult educators. He was not the only or the last one to do so. In fact, the off-ramps on the road to Damascus constitute something of a career path for adult educators. Almost no one, with perhaps the notable exception of a professor of adult education whom we interviewed, claimed that they had any intentions of being in this field by dint of pre-meditated act. Yet, there is something about adult education that captures the imagination and inspires commitment and a desire for action that goes beyond aspirations for professional development.
Despite the happenstance of one’s entry into the field, the adult educators we spoke to overwhelmingly expressed a commitment to stay now that they had arrived. The description of adult education as a passion was recurrent in the interviews and speaks to a hope for the future of adult education associations. The challenge is how to best tap that passion and determine the direction in which organizational energies should flow.

**Some early discoveries**

The interviews suggest in general a serendipitous entry to the field, an entry depicted in nostalgic terms, much like Corbett’s description with overtones of a revelation. The discovery of PACE as one of adult education’s organizational homes comes later, as adult educators begin to seek out other like-minded people and groups.

Bill Day was one of PACE’s founding members and a self-described adult educator of the old school, having begun his career in the mid-1940s. As with so many other adult educators, he barely knew what he was getting into:

*I guess I was teaching English when I was 19 in the bunkhouses at Ocean Falls without - I was unwittingly recapitulating the Frontier College....I’d never heard of Frontier College. I’d never heard of adult education, but I was a kid in university living in bunkhouses in an environment where very few people could speak English. It was post-World War II and Ocean Falls in those days was staffed primarily by people from Central Europe, few of whom could speak English. And I was in a bunkhouse with them, mostly ill-educated, and I was going to university. So I was their herr doctor professor, you know. And so I blundered into teaching English for beer.*

*(Bill Day, 5)*
The 1940s were certainly tender years in the history of adult education and Day's lack of knowledge about Frontier College or adult education isn't terribly surprising. It's clear though that Day made a connection with an idea in his experience at Ocean Falls and it's one that he has carried with him ever since. Within five years of this experience, Day found himself as Director of Adult Education in Maple Ridge, already taking on a leadership role in the field at the age of 24. By age 28, he was heading up the adult education programs in Surrey, one of the three major districts for adult education, the other two being Vancouver under Burt Wales and Victoria under Jack Dalgleish.

Ten years after Day's entry into the field, little had changed it seemed. Gordon Selman describes his first day at the University of British Columbia in 1954 at the age of 26. There he not only discovered adult education but found that it was something that appealed to him, not only because of its central mission but also because it was so vaguely defined that it represented more of an opportunity than a disadvantage:

*I don't think I'd ever heard the words adult education until the first day I reported for work. And here was a guy, in the form of John Friesen, the director, who had all this community based philosophy, the co-operative movement, all kinds of stuff, where the whole world out there was within his ken, as far as education and what universities should be doing. We were beginning to move into the period when the universities were beginning to feel that their role in the field had to be more, to use the wrong word, but high-falutin' than it used to be. There are new colleges now, there are all sorts of things, we've got to move up the scale. But anyway, here was John Friesen and that was the world I moved into, that said, you know,
anything out there that’s adult education is stuff we should be involved in one way or another *(my emphasis).*

*(Gordon Selman, 77)*

Selman’s description suggests a dawning of awareness in himself but also within the university of a purpose to be fulfilled. The formation of PACE and its antecedents reflects similar efforts to create a known, recognizable character to the field. By 1972 and the beginning of PACE, these original leaders in the province were in agreement that adult education has indeed taken on a shape and character that is both recognizable and worthy of recognition and consolidation.

*The second generation enters the field*

However, what certainly hadn’t changed was the way in which new people connected to the field. Despite the developments in the field, its increasing public awareness, and its growing influence and presence, there is very little to distinguish the haphazard entries of adult education’s early leaders from those that occurred much later, at a time when adult education was considered to have “arrived.” Consider some of the newer personalities who joined the field and became active members and board members of PACE:

Mark Selman, a former president of PACE from 1990-1992, offers a typical response to his entry to adult education:

...and then I happened to get a job, not a job I expected, involved in continuing education... so once I got into that role, which was fifteen years ago, then I became interested in those organizations.

*(Mark Selman, 8)*
A trajectory like Mark Selman’s into adult education might not seem so surprising given that his parents were both active in the field. His father Gordon was a well-known adult education professor and historian and PACE’s first president while his mother Mary was also well respected as an adult educator, particularly in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL) where she was a well-known teacher and author. However, Mark Selman’s description is less surprising given the similarity of responses offered by the other participants in these interviews. Other happenstance moments were described in the interviews. Participants with little historical background or formally acquired knowledge would somehow invariably find themselves in an educational environment that prompted them to reflect on the importance of adult education as a vague concept. Despite this similarity of happenstance, the entry points are incredibly diverse, almost impossible to generalize: working in sales at a department store, sitting beside the right person at a night class in university, doing the accounts at a private career college, teaching workers in a milltown in northern British Columbia, thinking of ways to avoid the draft in the US in the 1960s, stumbling from the social sciences to a government job during a summer break. These are all highlighted as experiences where the notion of adult education first took hold. Gyda Chud, a program head at Vancouver Community College and former secretary on the PACE board, describes her entry to adult education in a way that makes Ned Corbett’s experience seem like a short cut:
Well actually my entry in to adult education came from an interest in kids...

(Gyda Chud, 3)

She later on explained that her interest in the education of adults was the result of being involved in early childhood education as a teacher trainer, but her opening statement to the question of her entry to adult education was compelling for its ability to demonstrate that there were few limits to how adult educators came to identify themselves with the field.

**Discovering the uniqueness of adult learning**

The connection to adult education stems from two main points of origin. The first is an environment where adults are learning and a realization that such an environment has unique qualities, often unlike formal schooling. This uniqueness includes and impacts not only the learners but also the person nominally in charge of making the learning happen.

One PACE board member who was interviewed offered a fairly traditional depiction of an entry into the professional world of adult education. This participant was a PACE board member in the 1990s up until 1999 and has held several leadership positions in the BC post-secondary system as it developed in the 1970s. He was also one of the first doctoral students in the University of British Columbia adult education program, headed by Coolie Verner. He describes his entry to adult education as “traditional,” referring to the
underdeveloped nature of the field in terms of preparing educators to work with adults.

I originally started teaching at the post-secondary level at San Francisco State University in 1966. That was my first introduction to adult education - in the very traditional sense. I was in a doctoral seminar at Berkeley, and the fellow next to me said he needed someone to teach an undergraduate Introduction to Marketing course for the fall semester at San Francisco State University. The course would start this week and be from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. one night a week. I had the qualifications to conduct the course, both industrial in Canada and academic as I had a Masters of Science in Marketing Management. I said "yes." So it was the traditional introduction to adult education - no instructional experience, no instructor training, just pure content knowledge and what could be classified as sector related experience.

Interview participant 6, 2

Rita Acton, another board member during the late 1990s, describes her moment of recognition of the uniqueness of adult learning. This leads not only to an awareness of adult education as a field of practice, but as something worth pursuing in greater depth:

My very first introduction to it, I would say, was when I worked at the Bay. First, I was a salesperson and then I was asked to do their Customer Service. And it was the first time I had thirty adults in a very small room and I had to talk about customer training for two weekends in a row. And I realized then that there's a lot you can do in a short period of time and, more importantly, creating an environment despite some of the conditions, which was a very crowded condition; and seeing the changes that can happen. So that's what created an interest in adult education rather than teaching someone younger than this. So I went from the Bay and I got a diploma in Adult Education to continue that interest of mine in the field. And then I got my M.A. in Adult Education.

Rita Acton, 2
The accounts of both members quoted above describe typical entry points. Adult education is recognized as something that is familiar but not considered carefully enough to matter. In Rita's account, she is confronted with a group of learners with little attention to the learning environment or the context of the learning situation and immediately recognizes some sort of gap or absence of knowledge required for the job. In the first example quoted above, the gap is clearly evident from the educator's point of view. All his colleague was looking for was an expert. The educational side of the experience is completely undervalued. In both cases, the feeling of absence led to an increased curiosity, which both members nurtured and acted upon through the formal channels of an educational program in adult education. One member (Rita) pursued a diploma, then a master's degree, while the other completed an Ed.D. Many of our interview participants had close academic ties to the University of British Columbia, which for many years was the sole provider of adult education professionals in the province and one of the leading adult education faculties in the country. We shall return to the role of the University of British Columbia as a channel for professional adult educators in Chapter 6, as it had significant influence in developing a climate of professional adult education.

From a discipline to a passion

The second point of origin for the recognition of adult education emerges from the first. Adult education is seen to be not simply a question of attending to adults in a learning environment, but it takes on greater significance as well. Some
of the PACE members we spoke to refer to a world that opened up to them as a result of their interest in adult learning and its socio-cultural impact. That is, most of the individuals we spoke to consider adult education to be beyond the instrumental knowledge of knowing how to work with adults in learning situations. There is an added significance to the term adult education. Here is how one PACE board member describes the feeling:

It's going to be a long story ... Basically, I practised law when I was in my junior years and what happened was I realised that there wasn't enough public legal education and people weren't coming to my meetings with the ability to have an informed consent and make decisions. So we needed to have legal education. That grew into a passion, working with transition houses for women and other social issues. That became a passion in terms of not just legal education, but community development. And so it was everything from professional development to community development.

(Interview participant 11, 18)

This notion of adult education as a passion is a prevalent theme in the interviews. The word was used repeatedly in explanations about how people discovered the field for themselves. Passion was a characteristic of the field; it not only defined the attraction to the kind of work that adult education involved, but also the individuals who practiced it. Passion is part of the story of adult education. Mention of it even captured the spirit of the interviewers in this study!

That's why I came in because it seemed to be the best place that - not completely, but at least in key ways - matched what I had been doing and what I wanted to do, even though I didn't know anything called the field of adult education. But when I made a decision to carry on with my graduate work, I thought this is loose enough and wild enough and it's got lots of passionate people here. This looks
good. You know, it's not too fuddy duddy and concerned with status and all of that. But that sense of it being a place for refugees, I think is really good.

(Shauna Butterwick in Gordon and Mary's interview)

A recognizable profession

While the sense of discovery remained consistent over the years from generation to generation of adult educators, it is also clear that by the time of the founding of PACE, adult education had developed enough to be a field of study and practice that those on the periphery could begin to discern and consider entering. Rita Acton’s quote above suggests this to some extent. Her interest in teaching adults in a workplace environment eventually lead her to pursue studies in adult education at the University of British Columbia, which was clearly regarded as the place where adult educators acquired their knowledge of the field as well as their professional standing. Despite the haphazard nature described by many of the interview participants, it was the general opinion that by the 1970s, the university (particularly UBC) and the professional associations (CAAE and PACE) were recognized as places to belong. Two of the interview participants, Tom Sork (PACE VP in the early 1990s) and Nick Rubidge (one of the first members of PACE), both of whom hold doctorates in adult education, claimed untypically to have entered the field through the “front door”—that is, by knowing that the university enabled one to become a lifelong professional practitioner of adult education. (Both were connected to agricultural extension programs but went on to do graduate studies in adult education.)
I guess, from all the people I know in adult education, I had the most direct entry to the field, the earliest of anybody I know. I was working in adult education two weeks after I got my undergraduate degree. And so, how I got into the field is that I was studying agriculture as an undergrad in the States and came from a farm background. And I thought about going into agricultural extension, as an important form of adult ed, certainly in the States, and so I took a couple of courses as an undergrad and then when I graduated as an undergrad, I had an opportunity to go to work for the university's conferences and institutes office. So I started to do adult education work right after I got my undergraduate degree. And, because I was working at the university where this Master's program was, I started a Master's program right away as well in adult ed. So I went right from my undergrad into a part-time Master's program where I was working.

(Tom Sork, 6)

This was also true of PACE, where those practicing in adult education were encouraged to become part of the fold of professional adult educators. In the case of Helena Fehr (PACE VP from 1998-2000, and acting President in 2000), she was recruited into PACE while working in the department of Continuing Studies at Simon Fraser University. Gyda Chud and Stephen Duguid, on the other hand, were recruited by coworkers at Vancouver Community College and Simon Fraser University respectively. In this way, both the university (UBC) and the professional association (PACE) served to inculcate practitioners into the world of adult education, with a known intellectual tradition, philosophical and historical foundations, and working applications of theoretical knowledge.
Adult education as a journey

Individuals like Mark Selman, Rita Acton, and Gyda Chud represent the second wave of adult educators on the BC scene, a generation with significant differences from the likes of Friesen, Day, Selman, and Buttedahl, who were instrumental in creating the field into a definable and recognizable entity. The individuals who entered the field later, in the 1970s, 1980s, and even 1990s, were persuaded by the message that adult education seemed to deliver and their views on adult education, though divergent, maintain a coherence of purpose and an affinity to the grander ideas underlying the field, something beyond instrumental knowledge and skill development and approaching more of a philosophical outlook. They too were attracted to the mission of PACE and the forum of ideas that an adult education association promised and were eventually drawn into leadership positions by the 1990s. The pathway into both the field and the association that sought to speak on behalf of adult educators was remarkably consistent from the early days of the 1950s and 1960s right up until PACE’s final years.

What is clear from these descriptions is that adult education evokes the idea of a journey more than a destination. Its home is found on the road, like Corbett’s Road to Damascus, as one is on the move, from one interest to another or at a crossroads of ideas and passions. But this description gives rise to a potential dilemma. Adult education, described this way, is a changing phenomenon, retaining a protean character that individuals must wrestle with. If
adult educators, then, mark themselves as cultural, social, and philosophical wanderers, what are the implications for a defined place (like PACE) that seeks to establish itself as a stable, secure home from which to form a community? Is the formation of PACE merely a snapshot in the history of adult education? Or were the forces that brought adult educators together under one umbrella in 1972 strong enough to create a vision and a movement of adult education that subsequent generations of adult educators could accept and promote for themselves? These are questions I take up in the next chapter.
Chapter 5: Toward a System of Professional Adult Education

After considerable discussion, compromise and organizing, the founders believed that they had provided a manageable forum for adult educators through the creation of PACE. Its success, therefore, depended upon these individuals to communicate a vision for adult education that appealed to people who were embarking on their own discoveries of the field. In this way, PACE became as important as the university as a place where adult education drew its most active participants and where individuals learned to regard themselves as adult educators.

In this chapter I describe how PACE was built upon ever-shifting foundations. Nonetheless, the members accomplished much as representatives of the field of adult education, while members who participated in PACE activities found enormous benefit from their involvement. The history of PACE, then, is a collection of paradoxes. Its greatest strengths give way to its most vulnerable weaknesses. Its weaknesses are often disguised as strengths. The inspiration members found in the organization often dissipated due to lack of commitment or energy. At the same time, I explore aspects of the adult educator identity, with a specific focus on how PACE served this identity, what such an identity meant to PACE members and how these members saw themselves as adult educators in a field of professional practice where PACE was a major representative body for
practitioners. I also seek to determine how PACE fulfilled its function as an adult education association and what activities it carried out that helped it to accomplish its goals as “the umbrella organization representing all the segments of the field of adult continuing education and lifelong learning” (Buttedahl, 1986, p. 33).

Thriving on the brink of collapse

Throughout its history, PACE continued to grapple with the threat of extinction. The idea to disband PACE, or at least reconceptualize it, was not a suggestion that appeared only toward the end of its life, but rather an ongoing discussion almost from its very beginning. So prevalent was this theme that it serves as a defining characteristic of PACE and indeed is a theme with which adult educators continue to contend. So it is not enough to argue simply that adult education associations have disappeared because members became overwhelmed by the conditions of the times. In fact, the opposite seems to hold true—that the adult educators have always been under siege but have managed to keep going.

Part of the lesson to be learned from PACE’s experience is that adult educators were creating and maintaining ways of survival and even success during difficult times and found themselves incredibly adept at adjusting to variable circumstances. PACE found itself on the brink of collapse at different moments in its history but managed to survive each time until the last when it was finally and officially dissolved. This chapter, then, focuses on those factors that enabled
the association to survive and thrive despite the challenges it faced along the way. I seek to qualify the argument that professionalization led to the undoing of adult education and suggest that while it did create a fragmented understanding of and loyalty to the field, it also contributed to the development of what appears to have been a comprehensive and successful adult education “system,” including both the theoretical underpinnings of the field and its practical applications in the workplace, particularly in formal educational settings, where many so-called professional adult educators served out their careers.

The benefits of an adult education association

The constant threat of extinction offers a tempting foregone conclusion: PACE never had a chance, and its founding members were hopeless romantics pursuing a vainglorious dream of a movement that was doomed to fail. Yet the interviews reveal a different portrayal of this theme. Indeed, PACE members felt their organization unraveling at times, increasingly so towards the end. But what appears as PACE’s greatest weakness in its prevailing sense of uncertainty and indefinability, was also something of a strength. What some saw as an untidiness of image, others regarded as an attractive scruffiness that would never work anywhere else. PACE served as a refuge for those who served many and varying professional interests. This was a topic of discussion that invariably came up in the interviews and one for which my analysis has found little resolution. What it reveals, however, is a defining characteristic of both the organization and the field
in its entirety. For instance, that was how Rita Acton described her fondness for PACE:

I really was proud to be associated with it. It didn't have a clear sense of identity, but I think that's one of the beauties of the field, is that when it becomes so specialized and labelling, you know, exactly what it stands for, it closes out doors for other people, with other specializations, or other interests that they can bring into it.

(Rita Acton, 28)

What members found exciting was a sense of connectedness with others who were in different professional areas but linked through the education of adults. There is a lot of ground to be covered, not all of it of interest or relevance to each individual associated with it, but along with this heterogeneity came the chance to be exposed to something greater than one's immediate interest. It was this sense of connectedness that gave one's discovery of adult education its revelatory flavour. And therein lay one of the field's great strengths, as two PACE board members describe:

And thinking, like let's say there was something like a PACE. Okay, it's not exactly in my area, it would be more general. But at least it would be exposure to ideas in a more generic way...even though it wouldn't have affected me directly, you get a sense for what's happening in the field and what people are supporting and what they aren't supporting, what's happening at the colleges with online learning and what they're concerned about politically in terms of adult education. Like we're talking with international education, you know. And so, just to have an organization, whether it be PACE or some other that you can attend meetings or understand these connections, right. And to get that newsletter, which was a small newsletter, but sort of let you know what was happening.

(Interview participant 20, 93)
So PACE to me included and involved a grab bag of interesting and dedicated individuals. It involved all of those individuals, who may have belonged to other associations that were more reflective of the discipline or field that they were being paid to operate in, but who were still interested in adult education.

(Interview participant 6, 48)

Sometimes people would say, that's what's happening over there! That's interesting - oh, you're working with the aboriginal community and, you know, here are some good things happening, here are some - oh, we've got difficulties or whatever. And some people would - let's see, maybe we can help here or whatever.

(Interview participant 6, 87)

As the descriptions from the members quoted above suggest, PACE provided a space where people could explore the broader canvas of adult education and explore issues of importance beyond the confines of their own occupations. It provided an opportunity to expand one's horizons and get a better sense of the entire field, understanding that adult education was immensely broad and diverse. For many members, like Margaret Owens, this was one of the main benefits of PACE:

What are some of the things I need to be thinking about? Where do opportunities lie? Going beyond the scope of things that we have done over the last few years, but I'm looking perhaps at some other areas. How does one find that out? Normally, through conferences, through specialist colleagues across the board. But where are the opportunities for those discussions?

(Margaret Owens, 118)

Margaret's comment above is very similar to that of Errol Lipschitz, who served as treasurer of PACE for its final years. Errol seemed to want a place or a
forum for the big questions to be discussed. What is the role of continuing education? How does adult learning best serve a democratic society? With the development of a sophisticated college system in British Columbia that offers a range of new opportunities for part-time and continuing education students, where do adult educators turn their attention to next? Such questions were well beyond the scope of the immediate professional interests of most members and possibly not even of interest to their employers. But in the absence of an association like PACE, which encouraged these discussions, there seems to be a disconnect between working practitioners and the theoretical underpinnings that formed the foundation of their profession. After the university, nothing.

You see, that’s what I think is missing today. And I think that’s within the ambit of the UBC or SFU professors. These are the guys that have the thinking ability to broach it, to discuss it, to tear it apart and come up with ideas.

(Errol Lipschitz, 24)

I think because of PACE and being on the membership list, I feel I was invited to events that I might not have otherwise seen.

(Errol Lipschitz, 54)

Errol is referring to the kinds of discussions that PACE was suitable for, and the point that PACE provided a space for these broad questions to get deliberated. Throughout the interview Errol raised these questions as debates that don’t seem to be occurring but as ideas that cross his mind, although he argued that without PACE there is no longer a natural forum to air these ideas and questions. What is also important is that PACE provided a forum for discussions
or presentations for those, like himself, who might not otherwise be exposed to such exchanges.

**The unique character of PACE**

Many of the reasons why PACE membership was appealing reflect the general benefits of being involved in any professional association (Shelton and Spikes, 1991). However, because PACE was an adult education organization and an umbrella organization it did have some unique characteristics. That uniqueness of character was rooted in the ideas promoted by PACE’s early leaders in Buttedahl, Selman, Friesen, Day, Kulich, and the Clagues among others, that adult education had greater concerns than the needs of its own membership. In this sense, it wasn’t typical of a professional association. That is, its primary mandate was not to serve the needs of its membership. This was an idea that changed over the years, but at the time of its founding, PACE was conceived as an organization that sought to serve the needs of society, primarily through the attention to adults as learners. The members, in turn, joined to carry this vision forward, as practitioners in the field and as disciples of adult education. This view, which PACE’s early leaders consciously promoted, became part of the character of the organization. It was a view that was also inextricably tied to one’s sense of professionalism in the field of adult education. An adult educator was not simply or even necessarily regarded as an expert of adult learning; he or she embodied not only a skill set, but more importantly a perspective on the world and a belief in the effect that learning could have on that world. In the minds of many PACE
members, this was the tone set by those like Gordon Selman, who was regarded as a model for adult education professionals:

Gordon had, and has, an appreciation for every kind of adult educator. He didn’t distinguish between those academically-trained adult educators and the non-academically-trained adult educators. And so, with Gordon being there, with his influence being felt, everyone would have felt comfortable to be there. And I have no idea if that was a factor. But with his influence, it would just seem to me that the diversity of the organization would be quite broad, because of his very strong feeling about who was an adult educator. Now, I don’t know - I don’t remember the cast, who came afterwards, or if there would have been any feeling about any of that. Probably not. But certainly with Gordon there was a really strong sense that everybody who felt as though they should be there...

(Interview participant 20, 64)

The sense of professionalism that PACE's leadership conveyed to the rest of the membership and to the public was a strong selling point for the organization. It lent credibility and attracted attention to PACE as the voice of adult education. Errol Lipschitz, for example, was hesitant to describe himself so much as an adult educator as one who was associated with the field through his work at a private training institute. However, when he describes what he found appealing about PACE and its character, he leaves no doubt as to the importance of the sense of professionalism that emerged from PACE through its early leaders:

But I think that the bulk of the Executive and the people who were leading the organization were beyond it. They were way beyond - they were really not looking at it from an academic point of view, but from a real point of view of what’s right. And I think a lot of the people who were really the leaders were on the point of actually
retiring, so the people we encountered were people maybe no longer involved in the day to day - you know, the real leaders... They were really very bright men, very much focussed on improving adult education. So they were beyond the politics... That was so encouraging. I enjoyed that a lot, you know, the rapport of being associated with really articulate and really bright people and I guess when former members or the original leaders came to speak at sort of reunion dinners or annual meetings, you got a real sense of the professionalism in their lives. Gordon Selman - when you hear a person of that calibre speak, that's great. Very articulate, very focused, very inspiring... Certainly, being associated with professionals - I mean, some of these people were really very strong individuals working in different institutions, very professional, very much a leader in their field. For me, that ability, that interaction with experts, that was a privilege. It didn't help me day to day, but certainly from a professional development standpoint, it was excellent. It was a huge advantage. And being at a meeting and interacting with people with similar interests, that was good.

(Errol Lipschitz, 14)

Errol leaves a clear impression that people need to be 'qualified' to lead these important discussions about adult education for the practitioners to be up to speed on the issues of the day, not just in the instrumental sense but from a theoretical/philosophical point of view as well. He sees PACE as the perfect space for this meeting of minds to occur. But it also takes individuals of the calibre and influence of Gordon Selman and John Friesen to make these discussions persuasive to outsiders and practitioners alike. These individuals embodied the characteristics of the organization as professional practitioners in the field and embraced a grand vision of social improvement and democratic action through the power of learning. This vision contributed greatly to PACE's
appeal to joining members throughout its entire life even as fewer and fewer
leading members could be called on to express it as time passed.

The influence of the PACE leadership

It cannot be understated how important these leading individuals were to
the success of the organization. For later members joining in the 1980s and
1990s, the influence of the founders was still very strong. It was in fact a great
benefit of PACE to serve as the connection to some of the great names of adult
education in British Columbia. The opportunity to sit at the table with such
luminaries as John Friesen, Gordon Selman, or Knute Buttedahl was held to be
extremely valuable, not just in the professional sense of benefiting from any sort
of mentoring opportunities from these individuals, but also as a connection to
BC's rich adult education history. What they helped create was an idea worth
fighting for and promoting. It is a testament to their influence that their message
still drew people in years after they themselves had left the organization or
stepped aside from any leadership roles.

In addition to the aura of adult education created by some of PACE's
founding members was the sheer influence they held in circles of power related to
education in British Columbia. By the late 1970s, a national leader in adult
education, Alan Thomas, could make the claim that he knew every adult educator
in Canada (Alan Thomas, 15). Of course, he may not have known every person
who practiced adult education in the country, but he would not be far off in his
claim if the term 'adult educator' was self-declared. That is, Alan Thomas most
likely knew everyone who identified themselves as an adult educator in Canada. Thomas, like the founders of PACE, had been on the scene since the 1950s when adult education in Canada was a loosely defined collection of concerned educators coming mostly from the extension departments of universities across the country. He is referring to a small, well connected group of individuals who were connected nationally through the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE). The same could be said on the provincial level. Bill Day, Gordon Selman, John Friesen, and Knute Buttedahl could not only claim to know every adult educator in British Columbia, they were also most likely close friends or acquaintances with them as well. It was a small but tight community and PACE’s formation reflected that close connection. People were well placed to make it work. Selman, Friesen, Buttedahl, and Jindra Kulich worked from the University of British Columbia, Bill Day, Susan Witter and Marvin Lamoureux worked as senior administrators in the college system. Dean Goard, as first president of BCIT and a past president of the BC Chapter of the CAAE, represented the vocational education wing of the group. From the government side, Ron Faris, one of the most influential adult educators in the province during the 1970s, was not a PACE member but was well known to PACE members and certainly sympathetic to the mission of adult education in British Columbia. Faris recalled that during his tenure as Executive Director of the Continuing Education Branch of the Ministry of Education, six of the eight staff members in his department
had degrees in adult education (Faris, 69). His most senior employee was Nick Rubidge, one of the UBC adult education department’s first doctoral graduates. Throughout the 1970s, PACE seemed to be part of an active adult education system, with strong connections to both the university and the government.

Cracks in the foundation

By the time of the 1976 Faris Commission, which sought to develop a provincial mandate for continuing education in the province, PACE was actively advocating on behalf of the adult learner in BC, with a strong, well articulated message. This was perhaps the peak of PACE’s influence publicly, though it was also the time when Bill Day, as PACE president, and Jindra Kulich were vowing to keep the association afloat for another couple of years, at least till the end of Day’s tenure. According to the study of PACE’s first 15 years by Michael Quinn (1988), Day’s presidency was one of the most vigorous periods in PACE’s history, and yet this was a time that Bill Day describes as very tenuous, a period when the organization had already outlived its usefulness:

I think every one of us did our best to proselytize, to replicate, a set of values, and to act out a sense of loyalty to the overall field, to remain in contact, etc., etc., etc. I might add, it was that kind of activity that kept CAAE and PACE in being as long as they did. They died late. Those organizations lived ten to fifteen years past their actual time of potency...That’s right. Keep the damn thing going as long as - that is absolutely correct. Jindra and I spent a lot of time drinking beer and every once in a while, I’d say, oh Christ, let’s wrap [it] up, and Jindra would say, well, no.

(Bill Day, 51-53)
Part of the vulnerability to changing emphases in orientation seems to have come right from the compromised beginnings of the organization—the delicate association with the vocational educators and the lessening of participation from the community education and voluntary sectors. Both Gordon Selman and Jindra Kulich express some misgivings about this. PACE drew its members from an institutional base: the university and the colleges. What was lost in the development of this system was a strong connection to the voluntary sector. To some extent, PACE worked well because its members had some support from their employers, mostly the post-secondary institutes, to host meetings, develop programs, devote time to publications like the newsletters or the PACE Papers. One could feel relatively confident, as Gordon Selman related, that participation in these associations was simply another duty attached to the position in the broad sense of working to be as competent an adult educator as possible.

Under this type of system, PACE flourished, but it is also possible to detect an inherent weakness in excluding the voluntary sector. The social movement aspect became weaker as a result and over time the organization began to take on concerns about itself rather than exclusively adult learners. PACE was beginning to become more of an organization concerned with serving its own members. This in itself is not a weakness, but it does lead to a fragmenting of purpose later on when discussions about PACE's future began to
take up much of the time of the board members throughout the 1990s. This is a theme that I will take up in greater detail in the next chapter.

Linking theory and practice, the university and the professional association

The role of the university, particularly the University of British Columbia, as critical to the well being of an associated professional organization elicited a divergence of opinions relating to both the success and the dissolution of PACE. From one perspective the university was regarded as essential to the success of PACE. PACE drew most of its membership from the university. In the early days, Nick Rubidge remembers being assigned a membership by virtue of his student status. In effect, students were invited to become members as a way of welcoming them to the field of practice. It was a membership that continued with the individual after graduation and PACE became the place in the professional world where adult education graduates could meet up again and stay current with changing practices in the field. Many regarded PACE as the natural next place to keep in touch with each other. As a result, PACE retained the breadth of experience and background that was encouraged by the adult education program at UBC, as Gordon Selman describes:

*The university training departments, if I can put it that way, the adult education people in the universities get to see and deal with people coming from all segments of the field. And they have a kind of perspective on that broader field.*

*(Gordon Selman, 83)*
This was part of the adult education agenda at UBC, a deliberate desire to create a field of practice that was as broad as it was deep. Those early members of PACE who were also UBC graduates credit the influence of Coolie Verner in setting this agenda from the academic and professional perspective:

_It was 1973 and I wanted to complete my doctorate. Coolie Verner was Head of the Adult Education Research Centre (AERC), as it was then called. I went to see him and I said, look, this is my background. He said you’re welcome because he also wanted a diverse range of students. Thus, he had a number of individuals in the graduate programs with this kind of tertiary or tangential relationship to adult education, that is, more by doing, than by systematically knowing or understanding the process. It was an emerging discipline at that time - we’re talking 30 years ago. For Coolie it was a field, and he was attempting to develop adult education into a discipline._

_(Interview participant 6, 8)_

_The other thing that happened, in the ‘70s is there was a whole host of us leashed onto the system. You could call them Young Turks. So there’s a whole bunch of people that came out of the work at UBC especially - Coolie Verner, Gary Dickinson, John Niemi._

_(Keith Dunbar, 110)_

Rita Acton, who joined PACE much later, describes how this agenda manifested itself in graduates during the 1980s who then left the university to join PACE as active professional practitioners:

_And at that time, they asked me to do the master’s, so I did an M.A. in adult ed... And I found out through PACE, through the different newsletters, all the instructors. I had - Roger Boshier, Tom Sork, Gordon Selman - very active at the time. So we had a very good exposure to some of the philosophies and ideas and for me it was important because it was a real connection to the field of adult ed. And I was with people that were committed to the practice of it._

_(Rita Acton, 20)_
Connecting with other adult educators

Despite the incredible drawing power of the founding members of PACE, they were successful in giving the organization its own momentum beyond their own personal connections, and PACE in its own right offered a chance for practitioners to network with others in the field of adult education beyond one's area of specialization, such as adult basic education, post-secondary education, or teaching English as a second language. Apart from having a space to talk about adult education issues generally, members of PACE also took satisfaction in the supportive climate that the organization offered and found encouragement from other professionals in the field even if their respective job focuses were quite different. That was something that helped keep people in the organization:

I kept my membership because, for the purposes of my consulting practice, I needed to keep up with the field. Not that I would get any business from anyone in PACE, but the business I was doing, which was mostly outside of Canada, with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank - by going to PACE meetings, I would be kept up to date on what was happening in Canada.

(Interview participant 6, 40)

In this description of what he saw as the value of PACE, this participant assumes that there is a field of adult education with a foundational body of knowledge, an intellectual tradition, and ongoing developments that he felt he needed to keep current with by attaching himself to PACE, as a place where this was bound to occur. This was commonly understood by many of the members
who participated in this study. Many members developed this understanding as graduate students in the UBC adult education program and carried it forward as members of PACE, but others—those without the direct connection to the university—found that PACE and its members helped provide this understanding of the field. Another member who came to British Columbia already as a committed adult educator found value in local professional adult education organizations as someone who was not new to the field but new to the province:

I hadn’t studied in adult education or any of that, so it was a real important education to be involved with CAAE, and it was after that that I went to study, went to work and went to study. So PACE was pre-programmed, I suppose, in a sense. You know, before I came to B.C., I would have been on the alert for it, but... I think when I was at the Centre1 - I must have been a member of about 11 organizations, or maybe more that had some connection, but that one was a place where there was more adult education culture, if you like. I didn’t have to explain anything to anyone there, or I didn’t have to section myself off.

(Interview participant 13, 21)

**Professional activities through PACE**

What made PACE attractive within the system of adult education was that it had its own place, not merely as a networking environment for graduates but as a place where these people, now working as practitioners in the field, found their voice. Going beyond the mandate of UBC’s adult education

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1 The Adult Education Research Centre. This was the original home of the adult education department at UBC.
department where neophytes were inculcated to the mission of adult education, PACE represented a forum and a space where practicing professionals could connect under the same broad umbrella but still bring together the wide range of experiences found at the university. As well, in contrast to the university, PACE served as a forum for adult educators to discuss the pressing issues of the day but still maintain a practitioner’s ground-level view of the world. Nowhere was this more evident than in the activities that constituted the public face of the organizations: 1) the publications produced by the PACE membership, namely the newsletter and the PACE Papers; and 2) the programs.

PACE’s outward signs of health were determined largely through these two types of activities. One of the measures Bill Day took as president of PACE to revive what he considered to be a “moribund” organization was to inject as much energy as possible into making PACE an active force in adult education in BC. He decided to do this through both its publications and its programs. As he mentions, he and others like Michael and Barbara Clague and Jindra Kulich “worked our buns off” (Bill Day, 61). The result was an organization that projected a sense of purpose and vitality, even as members worked hard to stave off collapse.

**Publications, creating a voice for adult educators**

PACE created set of publications largely through its newsletter (originally called *Pace Setter*, then *PACE Newsletter*, and finally *Connections*) and its *PACE Papers*. These publications are impressive for their quality rather than their
They depended heavily on individual members to keep them going and were difficult to produce with any regularity. At least twice PACE’s newsletter disappeared upon the departure of its editor. For years Derek Franklin had been the newsletter editor and, during a brief time when he had moved abroad, no one seemed to be able to coordinate its production. The newsletter was revived upon his return. Then, as PACE began to unravel in the 1990s, the newsletter changed editors a few times but it was upon the departure of its last editor, Starr Owen, that members found they were unable to keep it going due to a lack of energy and funds. There were some efforts to keep PACE’s words alive through a joint production of a newsletter between PACE and the continuing administrators (BCCEA), one of several attempts to work together. But like the rest, this initiative went nowhere.

Jindra Kulich edited the *PACE Papers* during the 1970s and 1980s and managed to do this from his position in the Continuing Studies department at UBC. His contribution marks a high point in the history of PACE publications. What Kulich, Franklin and others managed to do with PACE publications was create a unique voice for adult education that served a readership beyond the university, which predominantly published academic research. It is hard to imagine another forum where titles could be published such as the following:

Another PACE board member reflected that PACE offered a perfect outlet for his interests in adult education and served as the appropriate publisher for such ideas:

PACE was willing to publish papers that would not normally get published in the Adult Education Research Journal; for example, "Planning Program Budgeting Systems and Cost Benefit Analysis: Economic Considerations for Adult Education." You'd never get that published, at least in those days. But PACE would.

(Interview participant 20, 40)

For a time, however, these publications brought as clear a definition to the field as ever there was. The PACE newsletter often included historical articles about adult education in BC, developing a discernible tradition to be discovered by PACE members. As well, PACE publications gave over more attention to adult education in BC than any other organization in the province. The PACE publications reflected adult education's breadth of activity for British Columbians. The content of the newsletters reveals an attempt to maintain a broad outlook on the field with contributions on the voluntary sector, developments in post-secondary education, literacy, developments on the national front, trends in education (for example, the development of a "learning outcomes approach" in provincial education) and issues in lifelong learning. Unfortunately, in later issues of Connections, more and more space is devoted to
PACE’s own internal troubles and by 1997 “Whither PACE?” becomes the dying and dominant theme of the newsletter until its end in 1999.

**Programs, professional development for practitioners**

PACE offered opportunities for professional development that members found invaluable and edifying. Incredible amounts of energy went into the development of these programs. Topics were varied, ranging from the practical to the exotic, reflecting the great diversity of the field. Rita Acton describes how PACE served as a useful transition between the worlds of theory and practice by giving students an opportunity to try out their research on a crowd of working people rather than academics:

> Graduate students really shined. Because they would use the platform of PACE as an avenue to talk about their research. I did some of my practice runs, and I felt good there - they had panels of students. I think it was great! You know, one of the things we’ve argued is that it shouldn’t just be at a university, we had colleges involved, we had people from the Learning Centre, because education was not for the elite at universities and colleges.

(Rita Acton, 132)

In one respect, these professional development programs reflected most clearly PACE’s stated mission to “foster and maintain high standards of practice in adult, continuing, and community education” (PACE website), setting PACE apart from other organizations by its focus on becoming a skilled and knowledgeable adult educator no matter what field or discipline one practiced in.

> And I also thought that a lot of the programs that PACE offered really met my own professional development needs at the time. You know, I mean, in the area of teaching expertise for early childhood,
there were conferences and various things I could attend to broaden and deepen my knowledge there. But in the world of adult education, my place to broaden and deepen professionally was, you know, with the various conferences and programs and special events that were either supported or participated or partnered in. It really met a lot of needs.

(Gyda Chud, 11)

Considerable effort went into the development of these programs and the PACE members who were interviewed all seemed to have their favourites—a panel on international education, a tour of the Native Education Centre, an introduction to the Carnegie Centre, a presentation about redefining yourself as an international consultant. For Tom Sork, preparing these programs served as his own professional development, much as Rita Acton describes above, as a place to try out ideas. It was an area where instrumental knowledge mingled with social concerns about adult learning.

However, the optimistic views expressed by those who were interviewed run contrary to the increasingly disappointing attendance figures for such events. (Some programs continued to be well attended but the predominant memory among interview participants was that of dwindling participation.) If these programs were deemed to be useful, then why were so few people attending? This is one of the paradoxes that this study has discovered. This was a source of frustration among those who were willing to put so much voluntary time and effort into creating what they considered to be invaluable programs:
But I can tell you very straightforwardly that we planned meetings as a Board member where you had a lot of initiative and energy. And we had people in different groups; we had brainstorming sessions; we had lots of get-up-and-go. By the end of a meeting, it would come down to a very sort of, why are we doing this? You know, who's going to come? Why do we keep doing it?

(Rita Acton, 52)

As well, in talking to some of the interview participants, I discovered mixed views of the success of such programs in responding to the character of the general membership. That is, in keeping with the diverse make-up of the membership, it seemed impossible to please everyone at once. While some regarded this as part of the richness of adult education, others like Stephen Duguid, who served as PACE president from 1988-1990, expressed frustration:

I remember giving a couple of talks at them and it was hard to think of a common audience. It's hard to think of a common language you could speak, in a way, that would address all of their kind of concerns. If you got too intellectual, then of course a lot of people would say “Well, how does this help me do my job tomorrow?” kind of thing. And if you got too instrumental, then it's like “God, I get this at work all the time, can't we go to a higher level?”—something like that.

(Stephen Duguid, 43)

Professionalization versus social movement

The literature of adult education suggests strongly that the ongoing argument about adult education as a social movement versus a profession has been divisive and debilitating, and there certainly was a sense of indecision about which direction PACE should take in order to revive its fortunes as membership declined and interest sagged. The critical view of adult education argues that the
move towards a professionalization of the field has diluted its social mission, while according to those who sought a formalized system of adult education the attention to social movement activities has detracted from its credibility. However, many PACE members tried to leverage the benefits of professionalization to promote their social movement philosophy of adult education. As well, the interviews suggest that despite this disagreement of opinion on the effectiveness of the field as a positive force in society, members who regretted the loss of influence of adult educators today regarded both aspects of the field as important to their own identity as practitioners.

 Nonetheless, over time it is clear that as more specialized adult education organizations appeared (e.g., Literacy BC, Teachers of English as an Additional Language, Adult Basic Educators of BC), and as resources became more scarce for educators to participate in activities beyond the bounds of their jobs, these associations began to compete for the loyalties of individuals. PACE appears to have been weakened by this type of competition and in the discussions about their future, PACE members sought to determine a way forward. The question was—which direction to take? According to many of those we interviewed, there was an abiding tension between those who wanted to serve their own needs as professionals with a greater focus on programs versus those who wanted to make PACE more oriented towards advocacy. In this debate, the uniqueness of PACE
seems to have been lost. This is reflected in much of the adult education literature about its own definition and mission as described in Chapter 2.

Yet on reflection, PACE members had very little to say about their preferences for one direction or another except that no one had managed to be persuasive for any one direction in particular. Mark Selman even goes so far as to argue that the dichotomy of professionalization versus social activism within adult education is an unnecessary misunderstanding. His description of the situation in one respect describes how PACE functioned quite well in serving both interests:

*I don’t think those are actually in contradiction to each other. I think that those are resolvable tensions. There’s nothing about being a professional that has to militate against being involved in a social movement. And so, yes, at times for different people, one will predominate or the other, but it seems to me you can regard those as being the parameters within which fields operate instead of being, constantly being in a state of tension as to which of those is the true continuing education. We’d be a lot better off.*

*(Mark Selman, 42)*

It was certainly frustrating for members that this divided loyalty seemed unresolvable. For some it was better to avoid advocacy and focus on skill development and creating a more credible reputation as professionals. Others wanted a more activist organization, with the main focus on advocacy. Neither of these two options alone was palatable enough to the membership to make a go of it. On the contrary, PACE found its greatest appeal in its ability to straddle both areas.
The PACE bursary fund: winning in the middle ground

If there was one accomplishment in PACE that succeeded in bringing its entire membership together with a commonality of purpose, it was surely the PACE bursary. The bursary was created with some modest funds brought over from the CAAE and the CVA at the time of the PACE’s founding in 1972 (Damer, 1998). It survived all the ups and downs of PACE’s turbulent history and became a primary concern for members during the winding down phase of the association in the late 1990s. It is PACE’s last legacy and still exists today under the auspices of Literacy BC.

The bursary was a modest but extremely significant gesture of support to adult learners in BC. It began with a term deposit of roughly $7,000 (Damer, 1998) and was made available to adult learners doing part-time studies in amounts of $50 and $100. At the time, there was little interest or support for part-time students and it seemed to fit PACE’s mandate perfectly. It was an activity that drew considerable participation from the membership, with many members joining in the efforts to raise funds. By the end of 1992, the fund had grown to an impressive $160,000. Award amounts increased over time but not by much. Through the 1990s, PACE awarded on average about 30 bursaries a year. The total amount awarded each year climbed from $1,475 in 1982 to $8,300 in 1997.

The bursary fund had special significance to many PACE members. It got its start when a few members, like Michael Clague and Jindra Kulich, put out the idea to use the money for a bursary (Damer, 1998). It seemed to reflect for each
member what he or she thought was important about PACE's mission in working for adult learners in BC. On the one hand, the bursary served a very specific need: it gave consideration and support to adult learners, part-time learners, at a time when this type of learner tended to be ineligible for other supporting funds like student loans or grants. It also reflected the idea that learning, usually in the form of skill development, supported the notion of enabling citizens to enter the workforce and become productive members of society. Finally, the fund and the responses from learners who benefited from it seemed to support PACE members' own ideas about what was important in adult education—that is, working for the underdog, those who may have slipped through the cracks and who would go far with only a little bit of recognition and support. Some of the letters sent by bursary recipients even make reference to how the bursary has helped change their lives through greater access to educational opportunities:

I wish to thank you and all the remaining members of the committee for choosing me as one of the bursary recipients...Since I have returned to school, a whole new world has opened up to me...I am determined to reach my goal and this would be very difficult for me without caring individuals such as yourselves standing behind me every step of the way.

(Damer, 1998, quoting a note from a bursary recipient)

As Mark Selman mentions, the fund represented what PACE was supposed to be as an adult education association:
And I thought the bursary was very important because it was part of what differentiated us from an organization like CAUCE, which is clearly a professional association to serve the interests of the members. And I never thought of PACE that way. I always thought of it more in relation to CAAE, which was focussed on what learners needed as opposed to what adult educators needed. So I thought the bursary was extremely important because it was a kind of flagship for the fact that it was an organization about learners, not about teachers.

(Mark Selman, 26)

Keith Dunbar had worked on the bursary committee and poured enormous amounts of energy into raising funds and securing a future for its success. He felt the PACE board at the time of his membership in the mid 1980s didn’t do enough to ensure the future of the funding sources, and eventually left the committee as a result. But, like Mark Selman, Keith found that the bursary fund was essential to helping define PACE’s mission as an association for adult learners in the province. He makes a strong argument that, although the bursary money now resides with Literacy BC, this is not the same as when PACE managed the fund. According to Keith, while the bursary was associated with PACE it reflected more accurately the broad range of adult learners and their needs:

PACE was very, I think, instrumental in bringing some of the immigration groups to the education table. And that’s where it was interesting on the bursary, that’s where so much of your promotion went, to those groups, to get them to look at their students and whatever that needed some funding. And that’s why you needed so much more. And the interesting thing was, of course, that where’s the funding gone? If it’s just gone to literacy, that’s great, that’s better than nowhere at all. But it did support a broader
representation than just literacy. It supported general interest. It supported citizenship and immigration type things. That a truly continuing ed type oriented broad-based network can bring all those facets together.

(Keith Dunbar, 205)

In PACE’s final days, as it became more apparent that the organization was reaching a point of no return, discussion focused on the bursary fund and its future. Interview accounts and minutes from the final board meetings reveal that considerable attention was paid to securing a suitable overseer for the fund, so much so that it seems that PACE could only disband if members could be assured that the bursary fund would live on. Yet, at the same time, it was clear that the bursary itself was not enough to secure the future of PACE:

But I think, you know, something solely to provide a bursary, for me, doesn’t really provide a rationale for a whole major organization. I mean, typically, when it comes bursary time, the committee gathers, the applications are made, the award - fine and good. But to me, I’m glad that function is there, I think it’s really important and it gives PACE a little bit of a legacy - but to me, that wouldn’t be sufficient to resurrect either PACE or a similar such organization simply for the function of awarding bursaries.

(Gyda Chud, 118)

The end of the bursary, the end of PACE

The fortunes of the bursary were tied inextricably to PACE itself as it became more and more difficult to carry on with the same level of enthusiasm and commitment that had been generated with the formation of the organization. In the end, members felt they had to put the brunt of their final efforts in finding a safe home for the bursary, which eventually ended up with Literacy BC, where
it is managed and distributed as the PACE bursary, with former members like
Gyda Chud, Barbara McBride, and Errol Lipschitz still going through the
applications and awarding the funds. It is a small but important activity for a few
adult educators to carry on.

But as the bursary provided members with a clear sense of purpose, so its
transfer to Literacy BC spelled the end for PACE. In the next chapter, I look at
the final two years of PACE's history and explore some of the factors that
contributed to the decision to disband the organization.
Chapter 6: Whither PACE Part 2: The End of an Era

In the last chapter I looked at some of the aspects of PACE's character, through its membership, activities, and accomplishments, and tried to reveal a pattern of survival and even success in the face of increasing challenges to its well being and ability to carry on. PACE indeed was an association fraught with contradictions and uncertainties and members were never far from having to reconsider their commitment both to the organization and to the field as adult and continuing education transformed itself from a loosely coordinated grab bag of programs and initiatives to a more formalized and institutionalized force through the rise of the colleges in the post-secondary system and the reorientation of university continuing studies programs.

Yet, even as PACE began to suffer its most daunting challenges, the interviews we conducted reveal that loyalties to PACE and its commitment to be a voice for adult learners in BC remained strong among former board members, even those who voted in favour of disbanding the organization. In this chapter, I take a look at some of the developments that interview participants identified as troubling or challenging and discuss how they came together to present an overwhelming case for dissolution in the minds of the members who remained to have the final discussions on PACE's existence. As well, I give particular focus to
the final two years of PACE in an attempt to discover how events unfolded toward the end.

*The constant challenge of survival*

As the founders of PACE knew at the time, the success of the association very much depended on maintaining the delicate balance of interests among those who viewed adult education through various perspectives: as a social movement, as an institutionally-based activity, as a profession, as a skill set, and as a philosophy. It is clear from the archival research and the interviews that adult education continues to have an elusive character, despite efforts to set an agenda that would stick in people’s minds, both the professional cadre of adult educators and the general public. Michael Quinn’s (1988) study of the first half of PACE’s existence shows how each president struggled to keep the association going despite numerous challenges, such as declining membership, financial constraints, reduced influence, the intensification of work at the institutions, and an abiding uncertainty of purpose. As mentioned earlier in this study, as early as the 1970s the idea of disbandment was raised for discussion. For example, during Bill Day’s presidency, Quinn notes that Day and Jindra Kulich made a pact to keep the organization going “come hell or high water.” This occurred in 1976, only four years after PACE’s founding, hardly the hallmark of a thriving organization. As Bill recalls, there was already a sense in the mid 1970s that something had changed, like the sense of Alan Thomas’s discovery that he no longer recognized
adult education, except that there was still a desire to continue the organization, describing their determination to carry on as:

...a sense of a reluctance to let go of a dream. And a sense of very real loyalty and affection to a lot of highly esteemed colleagues, many of whom stayed in play, you know. But it was a dwindling group. You could smell it, and I think, I always had a pretty good nose for organizational dynamics, and by the mid-'70s, I was saying to everyone, look, you know, we're dead in the water. It's time to reconceptualize what we're about here.

(Day, 57)

Although he is hardly nostalgic about PACE's eventual demise, Bill was reluctant himself to pack it in, at least under his watch.

Fifteen years later, in a set of planning notes for the 1990 AGM, the idea of disbandment is raised again in the form of a notice of motion. The notice itself reveals that there was still indecision about whether PACE needed to be torn down completely or simply revitalized:

The intent of the motion will be to dissolve reconstitute PACE as it is now constituted and to form a new organization to be called the Association for Lifelong Learning in British Columbia (ALL-BC). ALL-BC will absorb the assets and liabilities of PACE, BCACEA and such other organizations as founding partners. The formation of ALL-BC will be done in the simplest and most cost-effective manner that takes advantage of the legal and financial strengths of the founding partners (sic).

Like Bill's earlier commitment to keep PACE going, so too did this motion fail to recharge the activities of adult educators into a newly formed or

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2 The editing in this excerpt is from the original memo that was found among the archival materials provided by Marvin Lamoureux for this study.
amalgamated adult education organization. So there was no reconceptualization, no name change, and no dismantling of the “old” association for several more years. There were periodic discussions about mergers with other groups, like the BC Continuing Education Administrators (BCACEA, mentioned above in the notice of motion) but this was a gambit that recalled the earlier difficulties PACE founding members had when they tried to create a unified voice from among the BC CAAE, the vocational educational people, and the continuing education administrators. Although that attempt resulted in PACE itself, neither the vocational education people nor the continuing education people were willing to give up their own organizations, although that had been the original plan. Similarly, any subsequent attempts at mergers brought on hesitant feelings of having any sort of compromise dilute the mission of the participating organizations, as Tom Sork describes when he took part in discussions about a merger between PACE and the BCACEA while serving as a Vice President in the early 1990s:

I remember sitting in a meeting for 3 or 4 hours talking about that and it was one of those tense kind of things where they didn’t want to lose their identity and we didn’t want to lose our identity, but in order to really make a new organization work we both would have had to give up some of that identity.

(Tom Sork, 88)

**Facing hard times**

During the 1997 General Meeting, under the presidency of Marilyn McLaren, PACE members decided to confront head on the issue of their future
survival as an organization. Membership was once again facing a crisis, having reached the lowest numbers in its history, down from a high of almost 300 to its current total of “only a few dozen” (Connections, June 1997). Other reasons for the somber outlook were also raised at the general meeting: other organizations competing for members’ time and energy, the many changes in continuing education and lifelong learning, the disintegration of any coordinated activity between PACE and any other local adult education associations, and the increased specialization both of the organizations available to members and in the work of the members themselves, which seemed to reduce the common ground among different areas of interest and work. Some began to question out loud whether PACE had outlived its usefulness. It was a dominant theme raised by the interview participants, not with any certainty but as a question upon reflection on what had happened in those final days. Margaret Owens offered one explanation which was raised in several other interviews:

And I remember thinking at the time, isn't this interesting, because here's PACE, this sort of umbrella organization, just sort of falling by the wayside with membership dwindling. But then here are some of these other, much more focused and much more narrow-scope organizations like Literacy B.C., like the ABE people, all like that, who continued, maybe not to thrive, but at least to exist. And I often wonder whether or not PACE had already served its purpose and whether perhaps there was a trend - as we saw politically, for example - but if there was a trend towards smaller kinds of units, with a very definite kind of affiliation for their members.

(Margaret Owens, 67)
The Future Directions Committee

Much of the effort to seek a way out for PACE was led by Knute Buttedahl, one of the original founders of PACE and a past president from 1978-80 and vice president from 1996-98, who headed up the Future Directions Committee, which was tasked to determine the next steps for PACE. The committee, chaired by Knute and comprised of 11 other members (Rita Acton, Peni Brook, Adrienne Chan, Barbara Clague, Jennifer Crawford, Bill Day, Wendelin Fraser, John Friesen, Paul Gallagher, Norm Henderson, and Marilyn McClaren) met throughout the 97-98 year with the intention to present a plan of action by the 1998 general meeting. Throughout this year, PACE continued to struggle with poor participation at events and a dwindling membership. The work of the Future Directions committee probably took up more time and energy than any other PACE activity that year. Bill Day, one of the committee members, undertook an ambitious study to contact everyone who had once been a member of PACE but had let their membership lapse. His goal was to determine the reasons behind the falling membership numbers.

In the summer of 1998, Day (1998) presented his findings to the committee. Among his results, he made the following conclusions about the decline in membership:

However the three main reasons identified were somewhat unexpected. First, a multiplicity of professional organizations, identified within a similar adult education profile, are competing for the same membership pool. Second, normal attrition [due to people in transition such as moving on, job changes, etc.] is not being
remediated. The third reason was the greatest surprise; many non-renewing members indicated a friendly interest in and feelings towards PACE, and an interest in maintaining their membership. They had just lapsed in the payment of fees rather than had made conscious decisions to break off their association; they indicated that a personal contact reminder might probably have stimulated renewal. This group numbered approximately 20% of the leavers. If, just for the sake of discussion, these data are projected over the past five years [that is, as though contact had been made and memberships renewed], PACE would be defined as an active organisation supporting membership of almost 200 (p. 1).

What had changed? It was not that there was any rancour or ill will directed at PACE. According to Day's own research for the Future Directions committee, people had merely let their memberships lapse due to a lack of contact with the association (Day, 1998). Day concluded that based on the responses of those lapsed members, a stronger connection to them and a little more concerted effort to stay in touch with general members might have boosted the membership up to approximately 200, which would have been considered a healthy total. Most of those interviewed spoke warmly about PACE and the good times they had and the wonderful group of people who assembled at the dinners and the meetings. Yet, it seemed that there simply wasn't enough to draw members back to the organization. Something of the passion had gone out of PACE, if not the field.

In our interviews, there was considerable discussion about the reasons behind this drop in the membership. Many people spoke of the increased work load in their jobs, how much busier they had become through the 1980s and
1990s. But as I spoke to the range of PACE members, from some of its founders
to its last board members, the pattern remained the same. Everyone was feeling
overwhelmed and cornered by increasing priorities and responsibilities, especially
in their careers. This was a condition of working in the field from the very
beginning of PACE's existence. Yet something had distinctly changed. Unlike
earlier attempts to ride out the rough times in hope of some relief, by the 1990s
there was a greater sense that time was running out on the organization. There
was too much to do, not enough resources to do it and not enough value for the
effort given. The question of work intensification remains pertinent for
discovering how PACE began to unravel in the late 1990s, but it is more complex
than that. It is not unequivocal that adult educators were simply busier than ever
before; they were always busy. Rather something had changed that affected their
ability to participate in an organization like PACE. Without a doubt, the
perception about where one's time was spent had changed. Where once
participation might be considered within one's margin of available time, by the
1990s that perception had certainly changed.

Changes in membership and mandate

There was another change in membership beyond the dwindling numbers
that reflects a significant difference from PACE's earlier composition. A survey
on BC adult educators conducted by Thornton and Kavanagh (1986) in the mid
1980s and covering adult educators across a number of adult education
organizations determined that 6.5% of respondents were self-employed. PACE's
own statistical data reveals that in 1991 roughly 10% of PACE members declared
themselves to be self-employed (Day, 1998). Within five years, that number had
almost doubled to 18% of the membership. By the year 2000, PACE's final board
members consisted of a total of 10 people, eight of whom were listed as
"consultants." This is vastly different from the people who had joined PACE in
the past, who were overwhelmingly institutionally based. Such a change in the
orientation of the membership, particularly at the board level, necessarily resulted
in different priorities for PACE, such as in its programming activities. For
example, in May of 1998, Reva Kalef and Paz Buttedahl put on a program
entitled "Reinventing yourself as a consultant." In November of the same year,
PACE members received a survey asking the question "How can PACE help to
meet your professional needs?" A few months later, PACE put on another dinner
program entitled "Consulting in International Education and Training:
Opportunities for Individuals and Institutions" organized by Doug Legerwood,
Helena Fehr, Morley Lipset, and Marvin Lamoureux.

The change in membership and members' outlook had different effects
on PACE. One was the negative perception of the transformation of PACE from
an organization that sought to serve the needs of learners to one that served
primarily its members. When I mentioned to a professor in the Adult Education
department one day that I was doing some research on the history of PACE, his
reply was dismissively nostalgic: "A great organization that became a forum for
consultants.” I found it intriguing that the mere mention of PACE would elicit such a quick and harsh response. What an impression like this fails to acknowledge is the effect that such a change in membership had on the mere logistics of running an organization. Without the daily interaction of coworkers or fellow students and communiques of one sort or another in the working and studying environment (e.g., posters on the bulletin board, announcements, memos, word of mouth), those working outside the institutions relied increasingly on an organization like PACE to keep abreast of developments in the field. However, Gyda Chud reflects that the changing membership did lead the organization away from what she thought were its best interests not for diabolical reasons but simply because people had different priorities in their careers:

So a lot of people who had worked in the postsecondary system were no longer with the job. And I guess it only made sense to them at the time to move into sort of a contracting, consulting vision. And not to in any way devalue or discredit their work, because they were excellent people, but I think it’s a different headset when you’re working as an independent consultant or contractor rather than within a system. And so I remember, you know, there were some programs with PACE that actually focussed on reinventing yourself as a consultant and it started in that view for me to kind of move away from the collective notion and more maybe moving to the needs of independent individuals, who were wanting to take their good skills and knowledge and put it into a more entrepreneurial way.

(Gyda Chud, 27)

Others reflected that this shift towards serving its own members more like other specialized adult education organizations was not the direction that
PACE had taken in the past, which made a difference in how their association was valued:

*I just was happy to go to meetings and talk to that person about what they were doing. That was fine, but, you know, the organization was trying to take a kind of professional stance towards its members, and I said just, you know, that ain't gonna work. Or at least, that's not why I come out.*

*(Interview participant 13, 75)*

Nor was "the professional stance" why PACE members used to come out till recently, at least not as the dominant view. When Paul Dampier stood before the Royal Commission on Education as PACE president in 1987, this is how he introduced the Pacific Association for Continuing Education:

*My name is Paul Dampier and I am the president of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education (PACE), a voluntary association of individuals and organizations interested in, and concerned for, adult learning throughout the province (Dampier, 1987, p. 42).*

This introduction puts Dampier in a position of advocating on behalf of adult learners while representing adult educators in BC. But as PACE membership began to change, so too did the focus of the organization as a professional association of adult educators to one for adult educators. As a result, as is evident from the minutes of the years 1998 to 2000, the focus of discussion of the board increasingly turns inward, not so much to the fortunes of adult learning or learners in BC but to the educators: how to serve them, how to be relevant for them.
Changes in institutional support

At the same time that more PACE members were finding themselves unemployed or self-employed, there was also a concurrent trend occurring with other members who worked in the post-secondary system, namely a lack of support for their efforts as adult educators beyond the narrow confines of their jobs. Over time there was a distinct change in the perception of employers toward participation in a professional voluntary association. Whereas once it seemed to be permissible within the range of one’s career duties and responsibilities, by the late 1990s it was largely dismissed, at best regarded as an activity to be carried out beyond the scope of one’s work, even if the two activities were still closely related.

Take the example of Gordon Selman himself on this subject. When writing about himself and the multiple roles he has played in the history of adult education in Canada and British Columbia, Selman is nothing if not a humble and self-effacing autobiographer. Setting aside his achievements and ambitions in favour of extolling the virtues and accomplishments of others, he paints a picture of a successful career adult educator buoyed by the generous encouragement and support of those who worked around him—supervisors, colleagues, students, friends and family. Yet despite the modesty, there is something telling about how Selman describes his relationship with John Friesen, his boss at the Extension Department, in a way that goes beyond mere humility. For adult educators working within the institutions, support—financial and moral—was essential to
playing any role in the professional associations that served and represented adult educators. Gordon Selman was president of just about all of them at one time or another, including PACE, for which he served as the first president from 1972-74. According to Selman (in press), John Friesen saw it as a natural part of one’s position in the Department of Extension to stay connected with the leading lights of the Canadian adult education scene.

I wish to point out that things would undoubtedly have worked out very differently for me, and my relationship with the field as a whole would have been very different if I had not become a colleague of John Friesen. He was one of the first Canadians to have gained a doctoral degree in the field of adult education, had broad experience in such work, and was a nationally known figure in the field when he recruited me to his staff in 1954. I was 26 at the time. John Friesen’s philosophical views of adult education and its role in the lives of people were a strong influence on my development. From the very beginning of our association, he saw to it that I had an opportunity to get to know leading figures in the field and he made it possible for me to play an active part in adult education organizations, provincial and national (p. 1).

Much like in Gordon’s account above, a lot of credit for the early support for PACE goes to John Friesen and the Extension Department. As Bill Day remembers:

John Friesen really was the heart and soul of it. He was the head of the UBC Extension Department in those days, and it was clearly the bellwether organization. We all looked to UBC Extension as our—what do you call it—mainspring.

(Bill Day, 15)

Twenty five years later, the situation was vastly different. Although early leaders like Bill Day, Gordon Selman, and John Friesen kept up their association
to PACE, they were also willing to step aside for the next generation of leadership to carry the torch for adult education (Selman, 1994). Many of these individuals were instrumental in raising funds, leading membership drives, and working to ensure the future well being of the organization (Damer, 1998), but as these leaders began to retire it became more and more difficult to recruit board members who had the social and professional clout to impress upon new members, policy makers, or potential donors.

Gender differences also played a role in this waning of influence. The early leaders of PACE were mostly men in positions of relative power within the institutes. Many women served on PACE boards, particularly in the final years, and Barbara Clague, who was the organization's secretary from 1978 to 1987, put in far more time than her part-time salary compensated her for in order to keep the organization running smoothly. Nonetheless, only one woman was ever elected president, Marilyn McLaren, who served in that capacity from 1994-1997. She was one of the few PACE presidents who was not a dean or director of continuing education but as a program coordinator at Vancouver Community College her position reflected that of many of her peers on the PACE board by the 1990s—fewer managers and senior administrators and more of those involved in the programming and administrative work of continuing education.

But if the leadership had changed so too had the institutions where PACE's leaders had once made their base. While some of our non-institutional
interview participants argued that it was too difficult to shoulder the relatively modest duties of hosting a meeting or sending out faxes given their lack of support from an employer like a college or university where they could book a room or use the photocopy machine, those who worked at these places felt no more secure than their independently affiliated colleagues. By the 1980s, even those working in the post-secondary system found themselves with less and less margin to carry out these duties. Tom Sork describes the situation at the University of British Columbia:

One of the dynamics that was happening during this time, I think, is that all institutions, not just the university, but all institutions were really tightening up financially. And the little pots of money that used to be available to support organizations like PACE and to put on planning meetings and those kind of things, in my view, basically dried up or became available to only a very a select small number of people. I remember going to board meetings, PACE board meetings at the IJ and at VCC and other places where, you know, they would have doughnuts and coffee and all that stuff. So obviously somebody had a budget from their institutions that they could use to provide that kind of thing. And I don't think any of us that were here at the time had a discretionary budget like that, so that we didn't even have any meetings here at UBC because I knew that we'd be able to get goodies for people, you know, and it was more convenient for most people to go to VCC or some other place. Now, I know that Jindra Kulich, when he was with the Centre for Continuing Education, he published or was involved in publishing PACE papers, and I think that there were probably resources that Jindra had control over at the time that he was able to put into PACE to kind of keep that whole series going. But tightening up in continuing education was one of those things that happened too. And I think, I mean he eventually retired and so those resources weren't available.

(Tom Sork, 66)
This difficulty wasn’t simply a case of scaring up doughnuts and coffee for a meeting. Priorities had changed for those in the university, not necessarily by individual choice. As the mandate of continuing education in the universities weakened, so the demands to carry out research and publish became stronger. Professors of adult education were just as susceptible to becoming overwhelmed by the intensification of work at their institutes and were less able to maintain an active involvement with the wider community of adult educators. This was a serious dilemma for PACE members, many of whom traditionally looked to the University of British Columbia as the patron of adult education in BC. In some of the interviews there were complaints about the absence of leadership from the university. PACE’s history demonstrates a successful relationship between the academic side of adult education, the orientation of graduate students to the foundations of adult education along with the practitioner focus of a professional association. But by the 1990s, much of this relationship had all but disappeared, so it is not surprising that it was missed. Tom Sork and Shauna Butterwick were perhaps the most closely involved in PACE activities as Vice President and Program Chair respectively but their own support was being curtailed by the department they worked in. Like everyone else, they had to choose where they needed to spend the little time they had.

However, for later PACE members, the growing absence of the university was a source of frustration and confusion. Once there had been an
assumption that the university should be there, as the connection to the community. The community in this case was exemplified by the PACE membership, who were the practitioners working in the field. One theme that came through in the interviews was an assumption that the university, particularly the University of British Columbia, was critical to the well-being of the professional association, as it had been during PACE’s formative years. Its absence was keenly felt, not only by those who looked to UBC for many of adult education’s leaders, like Gordon Selman and John Friesen, but also in the sense that the university should be there as the philosophical and theoretical bridge to the more practitioner focus of the professional association.

**The committee comes up with a direction**

By the 1998 general meeting, the Future Directions committee had come out with its report. It recommended a “gradual restructuring of PACE from an organization-based association to a theme-based association. The new focus and theme as suggested would be ‘learners’” (Buttedahl, 1999a, pg. 2). The report recommended that this newly transformed organization strengthen connection with the academic, business and community areas of interest.

The report also recommended giving PACE a new name and acronym: **PAL: Pacific Association for Learners.** The minutes report a “lively discussion” ensuing on these recommendations. There was considerable reluctance about the value of such change. In the end, Knute pushed the motion forward, and it was passed unanimously. The idea behind the Pacific Association for Learners reflects
perhaps a return to PACE's roots as a servant of adult education and seeking to support adult learners. But it was an impracticable idea that never went anywhere. Certainly PACE didn't mean to shift its membership to a base of adult learners. There would be even less stability with such a changing and changeable population. The move to PAL stayed an idea on paper; it never got implemented and the search for a new mandate continued. PACE's 1999 president's report written by Knute (1999b) on the subject concluded:

_We are not ready to reorganize as a provincial association of learners, or PAL. Our capacity to serve as advocates for Learners is well intentioned but upon closer examination we found it unrealistic (pg. 1)._ 

**More future searching**

Shortly after the report of the Future Directions committee, PACE board members held another special meeting to discuss their next steps, the form that the gradual restructuring should take. By this time, membership was hovering at around 130 adult educators. A report of the meeting indicates that "members were generally reluctant to let go of PACE as an organization for CE educators" (Mortensen, 1998, p. 2). The focus of the discussion was very much on revitalization rather than disbanding. Participants debated PACE's mission and how PACE's activities could reflect that mission. The same themes emerged. There was talk about the bursary program and its value, PACE as a forum for networking, the question of advocacy, the geographical scope (provincial rather than Lower Mainland).
At the same time, it was evident from the input to the meeting that members were feeling constrained by time, lack of resources, and lack of volunteers for activities. The idea of making learners members as well as the focus of PACE activities still seemed to be unclear or poorly received. Over the next few months various suggestions were put forward, some of which were attempted. A website was created in the hope to create an electronically hosted clearinghouse of resources, contacts, and issues. There was talk of becoming more internationally oriented, returning to advocacy, and widening the umbrella of adult education participation once again.

Several sparks were created in the deliberations of how to revitalize but nothing caught fire. If anything, things only got worse. By February 1999, when the board did another head count, it found that membership had dipped below 100 to a mere 78 members. It is not difficult to see how onerous this issue had become to those who worked on it. Apart from being a muddy, slow moving exercise, it was also taking up considerable amounts of people’s time, all of whom were also busy volunteering on the regular business of the association, such as program planning, coordinating with other associations, putting out the newsletter, and keeping in touch with members (which they were behind on).

*Keeping PACE alive, barely*

What is most surprising about the final months of PACE’s life is how late the idea for disbandment came. The board and AGM minutes from May 1998 to April 2000 for the most part reveal a small group of committed but overwrought
individuals who nevertheless continued to strive for a revitalization or reconceptualization of PACE. This resistance to giving in was demonstrated most clearly by Knute Buttedahl, Future Directions Committee Chair, original founder, and past president, who again took up the presidency from 1998 to 2000. There is nothing in the actions or accounts that suggest that Knute regarded disbandment as the desired way out and it appears he exhausted every other possibility during those final months. Certainly, it would have been heart wrenching for him, as a founder of PACE, to be the one to close it down. But like him there still remained a small core group who also felt that the show had to go on, as he reported at the May 1999 General Meeting:

Everyone we spoke to was reluctant to let go of PACE. We have had to acknowledge this desire and to plan to stay alive to meet the needs of adult educators and others. Early in the program year we decided to develop various events to test the reality of interest and participation, while at the same time consider opportunities for partnering projects with other like groups and to provide for networking and ongoing professional development which appeared to be of most interest to our members (Buttedahl, 1999b, pg. 1).

All his efforts suggest an attempt, like Bill Day's, over 20 years earlier, to inject new life into the organization. Many of those efforts reflected those taken by Day and Kulich; for example, a renewed focus on producing PACE publications. In October 1998, Knute decided to take over the production of Connections upon the departure of its then-editor, Starr Owen. The board also considered the possibility of reviving the PACE Papers series. Neither of these initiatives ever happened. The board tried to arrange a collaboration on
newsletters with the continuing education administrators of the BCACEA. There was also an invitation to help coordinate BCACEA’s upcoming conference. PACE managed a brief mention in the subsequent BCACEA newsletter but after that the connection seems to have died. Likewise, coordination with the conference fell flat; the BCACEA was having its own challenges in getting things done. There was a suggestion for PACE to run a computer-based training workshop at the conference. That never got organized. Connections failed to appear that year. There was no shortage of ideas, all of them tried before, with some success in the past. But it was one thing to suggest an activity, quite another to organize and implement it.

_Dissolution: a new suggestion_

Through PACE’s final year of existence, Knute was still searching for alternative pathways to survival for the organization. In August 1999, he sent out a note to the board regarding recent developments at the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE). The tone is ever hopeful:

_We still need to consider how PACE and its Program might be structured in the future. As Food for Thought (sic), take a look at what AAACE (American Association of Adult and Continuing Education) is doing to meet its problems. Does this sound similar to the discussions we underwent in our Futures deliberations? Make a note of any new ideas that this announcement may bring to mind and share them at our Board meeting on Monday September 20th (Buttedahl, 1999c)._ 

However, by November 1999, after what must have been an incredibly frustrating year for the board members, the minutes reveal a distinct change in
the discussion about PACE's future. Marvin Lamoureux had spoken to a friend of his, Tom Abbott, about coming in to talk to the board about their current difficulties. Abbott was a management consultant and had done similar work with other professional associations that had been having survival issues, particularly relating to declining members. PACE was not alone in its travails and Abbott was willing to talk to the board to discuss some options for going forward. By this time, the board was losing steam. It was at this meeting that the idea of disbandment was first put forward on the record. As the facilitator, Abbott was more cautious. He recommended a hiatus period rather than an out-and-out dissolution. This latter move would put the bursary fund in jeopardy, something that the remaining members felt strongly about and that needed to be resolved before any action could be taken.

In January 2000, the board sent out a letter to PACE members. The tone was one of resignation. Despite enthusiasm and a desire to revitalize, "the facts remain," including: declining membership, poor attendance, inability to publish Connections, uncertainty of mission. No one had to be reminded of these issues; they had plagued the association ever increasingly over the past year. The list was a reminder of the overwhelming evidence that things weren't working the way they used to. The direction now seemed certain, with only a few details missing:

*After much discussion and debate, your Board of Directors has concluded that PACE, as it currently exists, is not able to serve its members in a meaningful way or offer a focus to attract new*
members. In light of this situation, the Board has identified several options for the membership to consider.

Following then is the survey, the results of which are reported below.

Table 6.1: Results of the Future Directions survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>dissolve PACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;clearly&quot; do not dissolve PACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>limit the mandate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>collaborate with another organization (with a view to taking over)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>interested in contacting either VanCity or the Vancouver Foundation to manage the budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the February 2000 meeting, the dissolution of PACE became a formal motion on the floor.

**Eventually, the inevitable**

Even at the nadir of commitment toward participating in an organization like PACE, the survey results are not overwhelmingly in favour of dissolution. The majority of votes (18) clearly support some form of carrying on, either by going alone with a reduced mandate or by joining another group. But in the face of an unclear vision, an absence of participation and a complete exhaustion of other ideas, the board voted unanimously to support the motion.

Gyda Chud was one of those who attended these final meetings. She explained the mix of hard realism with the agony of defeat in supporting the idea of dissolution:
That was a bold and very brave thing to say [to suggest the end of PACE]. I remember the meeting at which it was said. I think maybe a lot of us had the feeling that nobody - as is often the case with that because it feels so disheartening, as a critique about the people currently involved. But, you know, I think we saw that we were really struggling for membership. I think we were really struggling at the events that we did sponsor, you know, to have sufficient numbers to really make people feel that they were at a happening kind of thing. I think we sort of saw the writing on the wall that the organization at least as it had been constructed wasn’t really contemporary to meeting people’s needs or the issues of the day.

Eventually, I voted for the dissolution. As sad as I was, it just didn’t seem to me, you know, worthwhile at the time to keep struggling on when things were really pretty bleak. And that in no way reflected my view that there wasn’t a need for an association, it was just a lot more pragmatic thing.

(Gyda Chud, 35 and 51)

Errol Lipschitz delivered a similar assessment:

Eventually I just felt we were flogging a dead horse. There were five of us or ten of us coming to meetings and ten, twenty of us at the AGM. What are we doing? What are we gaining? We’re struggling to get people out to meetings. There seems to be no reason to exist, other than the bursary. The bursary certainly we wanted to preserve and give it away, give it to the Vancouver Foundation or whatever. Just somehow or other, I think Linda Mitchell had been at a couple of our meetings and AGMs, and somehow through - I think it was through the efforts of Barbara McBride - that we stumbled on the idea of allowing the bursary to continue through an organization like Literacy B.C., which we knew was going to be around for a while, and it was a natural fit.

(Errol Lipschitz, 74)

The end of an era

Having made the heartbreaking decision to put an end to their organization, board members were confronted with a more personal tragedy to
mark their final days as PACE members in changing times. On Saturday March 11, Knute Buttedahl, PACE founder, president, keeper of the flame, adult educator to the core, died after a bout with Cancer. He was 75 years old and had made his life and career as an adult educator. He'd worked with Roby Kidd as the administrative officer on their way to forming the International Council for Adult Education in 1973, a year after PACE’s own beginning. He spent many years with the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of British Columbia where one of his most well known achievements was the creation of “Living Room Learning” in the late 1950s. At one point, Living Room Learning had 1600 people in 66 communities across the province participating in these study circles (UBC Reports, 1966). His death marked a particularly poignant end to PACE’s own life, which brings us back to the scene mentioned in Chapter 1, adult education as it looked in the year 2000, 30 years after its coming of age.

Helena Fehr, the Vice President from 1998-2000, was left with the unenviable task of winding up PACE’s affairs on behalf of the board while mourning a good friend and mentor. In many ways Helena represented a new generation of adult educators who came to take up leadership positions in PACE but under vastly different circumstances than her predecessors. She had been introduced to PACE through her boss at the time, Mark Selman, when they were both working at the Department of Continuing Studies at Simon Fraser University. It was through her work and the connections she formed there that
she gained her entry to the world of adult education. After joining PACE, she decided that she wanted to pursue graduate studies in education. Unlike many of the other participants in our interviews, Helena had actually found PACE before the university as the place to discover adult education. Later, through her involvement in PACE, she met Knute, who employed her in his consulting firm. Paz Buttedahl, Knute’s wife and an adult education professor at UBC, was Helena’s master’s thesis supervisor. Knute persuaded Helena to take a more active role at the board level at PACE. Like many of her fellow board members, the PACE membership list identifies her affiliation as “consultant,” reflecting a distinct change in the membership by the late 1990s. Eventually, she became the Vice President and then upon Knute’s death the Acting President. Her first order of business was to carry out the disbandment of PACE.

*One last vote*

A few weeks after Knute’s death, the board met again with disbandment now at the top of the agenda. The board now focused its attention on securing a home for the PACE bursary fund. Barbara McBride led the push for Literacy BC to take over. As an adult education organization, Literacy BC makes for an interesting comparison to PACE. It was founded in 1990, a relatively new organization but one that reflected the general trend of specialization. By 2000 its membership was up to 600—compared to PACE’s 62 (with 20 more honourary memberships for a total of 82)—and it had financial support from the province. After meeting with the appropriate representatives, the board agreed that Literacy
BC was the preferred organization to take control of the bursary. In April, Helena sent out a notice to the remaining membership about the upcoming special meeting and the motion to disband PACE. The letter is elegantly written but conveys a sad message.

On May 29, 2000, members gathered at the Picasso Café on West Broadway in Kitsilano. Opened in 1989 as a training restaurant for at-risk youth, it was a favourite venue for PACE members. It was affiliated with the Vancouver Community College, which was always well represented in the PACE board through such members as Gyda Chud, Rita Acton, and Marilyn McLaren. Like PACE itself, the café was something of an underdog, constantly struggling to stay afloat in unsympathetic times. Members came to celebrate the good times and the bad, and then, to business, vote on the motion. In the ensuing discussion, one member spoke strongly against the motion to disband and argued for the hiatus option as suggested by Tom Abbott. But there seemed to be little enthusiasm for exploring further alternatives.

The motion was put to a vote, with the final outcome of 22 in favour, 3 against. The Pacific Association for Continuing Education was no more, living now in the PACE bursary that is still distributed through Literacy BC.

3 After 15 years of providing training to at-risk youth, the Picasso Café eventually shut its doors in 2004, the victim of funding cuts. According to one news report, it simply became too difficult to stand up to the constant challenges to its survival. A VCC program coordinator was quoted as saying “The board is weary. Every year, it’s a fight to keep it going and the uncertainty of what will happen. They just got tired” (Vancouver Courier, August 5, 2004).
Chapter 7: Learning Our Way Back

An end to adult education?

(Gordon) You said the word passionate and that opens up a whole bunch for me. These guys over here. . .

(Gordon)...a lot of the passionate guys were in here. The guys - I've done more writing than enough about the way in which as the field became professionalized, the passion went out of it and we weren't out to save the world anymore. And I think there's some truth to that, but it can be overdone. And my friend Alan Thomas just gets really annoyed with me when I talk about that. He said, what do you mean the passion's gone out of it, he said . . .

(Interviewers in chorus): The thrill is gone!

(Gordon) It sure hasn't!

(interview with Gordon and Mary Selman, 100-104)

Adult education didn’t disappear with the demise of PACE. However, it is clear that the adult education as envisioned by those early leaders through the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s had transformed itself to something completely different. According to one of the field’s longest serving members, Bill Day, it had ceased to exist in the way it was conceived by the educators who got together in the 1950s and 1960s looking to start a movement:

Adult education no longer exists in any real sense as a field. What we have is a number of jurisdictions and special interest organizations, which in aggregate represent something like what we used to call adult ed. But they have few interconnections. Many of them perceive themselves to be in outright competition with each other, which was of course my dread always. And the dread of most
of the others of my generation. What we feared was adult educators tearing each other's throats out in the search for dollars.

(Bill Day, 67)

Or perhaps it had become, as Alan Thomas described it, "unrecognizable."

Whatever the case, the remaining few participating members of PACE had come to one last final corner of common ground. Whether adult education has changed, become unrecognizable, or ceased to exist, PACE as they knew it no longer served a purpose compelling enough to serve.

Indeed a lot had changed. Throughout PACE’s life, the educational system in British Columbia underwent incredible changes. From the development of the college system throughout the 1960s to the transformation of Extension Departments and the increased attention toward employment training to the proliferation of specialized adult education associations, adult and continuing education did succeed in becoming part of the fabric of education in British Columbia. In one sense PACE’s demise could be construed as a victory in the struggle to bring adult education into the mainstream. By losing its marginal status, adult education no longer served the agenda of the underdogs and therefore found itself confronted by the dilemma of its very reason for being. Certainly some PACE members saw it that way, particularly those who had been around in those early days. It was no longer possible to know every adult educator any more. There were too many. They were all over the place, in human resources departments, in the school boards, in the private colleges and
throughout the post-secondary system. They were so deeply embedded in the field as ESL teachers or as Adult Basic Education instructors and administrators or creating training programs with the federal government that they no longer took the name adult educator anymore. From the perspective of identity, in one way we are back to the invisible giant of the field as it was viewed in its earlier incarnation.

**Something missing**

As Gordon Selman mentions in the quoted passage that began this chapter, adult education is born of a passion—a passion for learning, for the improvement of society, for the power that individuals have for learning their way into more hopeful circumstances. Adult education continues to be connected with a revelatory attraction, an aspiration greater than that of mere expertise. In my interview with Ron Faris, he recalled his own research on the early history of the CAAE that became the subject of his book *The Passionate Educators*. In his study, Faris tried to show how the CAAE was gripped by a tension between the social movement activists and the more professionally oriented adult educators who later came to dominate the organization. According to Faris, when his book came out, many of the original players in the drama that he describes denied that any tension existed. Others, however, like Alex Simm agreed that there had been a struggle and the social movement activists had lost. And then what?

*They left for a variety of reasons. Some became active, say, in the co-operative movement or the trade union movement or other movements. And adult education became less movement oriented and*
more professionalized. There was less sort of common values and some, I think, they sort of threw up their hands as if, this isn’t what I believe in.

(Ron Faris, 88)

Something similar occurred with those PACE members who felt themselves drawn to its more philosophical foundations. When asked about the demise of PACE and where they looked to for similar concerns, many interviewees suggested that the gap had yet to be filled.

I mean, quite frankly, on that sort of a personal and professional and community activist level, I miss PACE. I do miss PACE. And that - in my own view, I don’t see an organization that has kind of come up to take its place in the same way. Not to say there aren’t some venues for people in adult education to come together, but not in the same way.

I haven’t found anything to replace PACE, for sure. I do think there is a vacuum. Now, maybe I have kind of gone in other directions then with my, you know, board and non-profit community involvement and maybe I’m out of the loop.

(Gyda Chud, 23, 63)

Yes, absolutely. And it does feel like you need something. I mean, when I’m helping look at the issues of how do we help people learn more effectively and so on, inevitably the question comes up - are there any local organizations we can belong to? And, at this point, no. So, I don’t know. I keep hearing that the Canadian Centre for Training and Development, that used to be the Ontario Society for Training and Development, I think.

(Interview participant 20, 71)
And I believe that’s even more relevant today, and I see the UNESCO notion of lifelong learning as an organizing principle and a social goal as essential. Certainly the students I see at UVic are all very interested in adult education as a social movement, not just a professional body.

(Ron Faris, 82)

The people I meet with in here, other than, you know, I do a lot of walking around here, so I get different perspectives. But I’m talking more the external community in terms of - like, I’ve lost my ability to connect with kind of grassroots organizations, poor people, all kinds of things that I don’t hear those kind of perspectives other than what I read, because I don’t have the memberships of those anymore. So I think there is a huge gap in this province and it might be a very broad, it might be like the Pacific Association for Continuing Ed, although I think that would be a wrong name - that would bring together people that work for the betterment of adults in teaching and learning. You know, where do I go to talk to people about different ideas... but I don’t get those different perspectives and I think that’s what is really missing, where you do bring together different ideas, different perspectives, different people working in different kinds of voluntary private/public environments. I would love to belong to a group like that now. It’s been ten years probably since I’ve had that kind of association.

(Susan Witter, 26)

But what about the adult educators?

So, is there a future for an adult education association in BC that will work the way adult educators want it to work, or is this, as many of our interview participants have suggested, a remnant of a bygone era, not to be re-created? Does the field of adult education have enough of a common identity with which the broad array of so-called adult educators would be willing to associate?
Many of those who were interviewed spoke positively about the need for a broadly based adult education association, if not PACE then something like it. On the other hand, there were still many misgivings to contend with and a serious reluctance to start up where PACE left off—that is, with an indecisive, uncertain vision or insufficient commitment to participate under circumstances that have changed little since the late 1990s.

For others, too, there was still an abiding sense of confusion about how an adult education association could fit into a field that has largely become unrecognizable or at least dispersed back into its uncoordinated, invisible presence. While Gyda mentioned that she turned her energy and social concerns to other issues, and Errol joined other organizations and took up other hobbies, another board member admitted that intellectually, adult education is not the area she turns to for sustenance:

I'm sad to say that I'm not terribly excited about the state of adult learning right now. I mean, I'm a person who, if you haven't heard me say it, it's not because it's the first time I've said it, but I get more nurturance for my set of wild ideas over there on the table from people working in communications studies, for example, or cultural studies. Or, you know, even people who are interested in democracy or political science or wherever the set of energies is coming from in the academy. But the literatures that I read these days are much more likely not to be based in education. I left reading adult education for my main ideas some time ago. Now, they are founded there. I mean, they are absolutely there, you know, there's no break in them in terms of my own hovering or attachment to them.

(Interview participant 13, 85)
Yet this last comment exemplifies precisely how individuals continue to carry out their own personal mandates as adult educators in a world coloured perhaps but not defined by any discernible adult education system.

**Returning to the original difficult circumstances**

It is tempting to throw up one’s hands and submit to a sense of powerlessness about the current divided state of adult education and its detrimental impact on its membership. However, if anything, history has shown that adult educators have weathered difficult times and managed to overcome the challenges of the day to seek socially purposeful solutions through the vehicle of adult education: As Hallenbeck observes (1964):

...over the years adult education has often been found in situations of social crisis. When times have been out of joint—societies demoralized, the value of human life forgotten, individual and social goals disintegrated—leaders have arisen who were wise enough to understand that reconstruction, reformation, and sometimes even revolution, could be accomplished through the education of adults. (p. 6)

**Some possible directions**

Collins (1998a) suggests that adult educators need to put aside andragogy as their defining theoretical underpinning once and for all. Based on a false promise of professionalization and a limiting factor in the capacity for the field to develop along its earlier social movement tradition, andragogy according to Collins has left adult education in the dust of society’s own movements toward social justice, emancipation, and lifelong learning. It has also been argued that the focus on the learner, which is largely promoted upon an andragogical foundation,
is too narrow for adult education and the field can only survive if it is willing to broaden out its scope to the challenges faced by society, in effect a reacquaintance with the earlier social reform views of adult education (Apps, 1989). A point that Cunningham (1989) made fifteen years ago is that the history of adult education is still largely unknown to those who profess to be leaders in the field: “Professionals who have heard themselves defined only in terms of what they do (that is, technology), are now beginning to wonder why they do it” (p. 44). In other words, for adult education to thrive, it needs to return to its philosophical roots as a social movement. This requires a more concerted and coordinated effort on the part of adult educators to infiltrate the ranks of those who practice adult education but don’t associate themselves with it as a field, a discipline, or a movement. It is as though we have returned to a time when the times demanded a coordinated voice for adult learning where none currently exists.

*The promise of professionalization*

In her argument for further enhancement of a professional image for adult education, Koloski (1989) admits that even positions of power and authority in adult education contexts rarely call for a background in adult education as a requirement for the job. Professionalization has given little guarantee of a stable profession for adult educators, despite their efforts to create one. This has led to widespread criticism of such a movement (Collins, 1998b). Following Larson’s (1979) study of the rise of professionals, Wilson (2001)
considers a definition of a professional that he can use in the context of adult education:

... It is not just the production of scientific knowledge and development of techniques that defines a profession. Professional identity also requires the profession to be able to control who produces professional knowledge, who has access to that knowledge, and how they use it (p. 77).

Determining who belongs within this group goes back to the crux of the problem. Wilson (2001) argues for three strategies to help build an adult educator's identity through the development of a recognized profession:

- build professional linkages with groups who practice adult education
- engage in reflective practice
- redress the current imbalance by considering one's political and ethical practices as well as the technical aspects. In other words, "practice politics" (pp. 79-81).

In this way, Wilson argues, "we become visible by standing clearly for something." Wilson's first point about building linkages is crucial. In this regard, researchers in the field have something to offer by returning to the variegated landscape of adult education and remapping the territory. At the same time, it is important to rebuild the connections that have been lost with the dissolution of a group like PACE provincially or the CAAE nationally.
The future of adult education in the university

We might consider that the deliberations about PACE and the ultimate decision reached by its members were the result of a collective learning process. In this view, the PACE members who decided that the organization had run its course and no longer served a legitimate need or function were making a brave and appropriate decision, in effect a rejection of professionalization within the context of adult educators as lifelong learners. What is missing, of course, is the movement. We can now ask: If not this (the paradigm of professionalization), then what? And where do we go from here as adult educators seeking to contribute to a collective identity?

In the universities, it has been suggested that there is a theoretical way out of this dilemma, such as critical adult education (Grace, 1998) or postmodernism (Briton, 1996). A critical theory of adult education also recognizes the importance of the collective versus the individual in effecting change. Reasoned conclusions are achieved by “social individuals” talking and acting in concert with each other and endeavouring to create suitable social, collective arrangements. And there do appear to be current developments in the universities currently to revive a vision for adult education. This was apparent in a recent conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE) in London, Ontario in May 2005, where a surprising number of presentations made reference to the work of the CAAE and presenters wondered aloud if it was time for a revival of adult education groups in a nationally connected network.
As well, in our interviews we discovered that others had noticed similar developments. Consider the observations by Alan Thomas:

I was associated with a CURA project with David Livingstone and I suddenly discovered that the CURA people were talking like the previous depts. of extension. I really found that. And now I think you find that departments of extension are existing functionally in departments of Sociology, departments of Political Science where in fact they would never notice that they were doing adult education.

 Alan Thomas, 33)

This comment suggests that the important work that committed adult educators saw as their domain of concern, if not expertise, is still prevalent but less visible owing to a lack of coordination and consistent, unified vision. That vision, which was started in the universities, particularly in the extension departments and to some extent in the adult education school boards, has now dissipated into a department here or another there or a community group somewhere else. The need has never disappeared, but now the work continues largely unknown to those who would benefit greatly from some exposure to it. We've been missing the connections, though perhaps there is more change on the horizon, as Susan Witter describes:

...the Canadian Association for Study in Adult Education, it really struck me - I thought, my goodness, this is a flip back in time. Because they were all, all the free workshops all to do with what I would call the social aspect of adult education and I haven't seen that. It struck me I haven't seen that - there was literacy and there was - there was just language, radical feminism, stuff that I haven't - you don't come across in the language. And I thought, where has that all gone?

 Susan Witter, 10)
It is clear from the history of PACE and the responses of many of the interview participants that the university still has a critical role to play in the field of adult education as the connection between theory and practice, the researcher and the practitioner, the teacher and the learner. The departments of adult education, as the central places for adult educators in the university, are strikingly different than the extension departments where PACE drew many of its early leaders. However, the adult education department is the place where practitioners still come in from the field to study, returning again with a more informed sense of how they fit into the field. As a result, there is still potential to take advantage of this networking point between students, practitioners, teachers and researchers. Any broadly based adult education association conceived currently cannot be a repetition of past examples given the incredibly different circumstances, but in order to begin a revitalization of the concerns of adult education and the coordination of activities, it seems appropriate to seek out those rich environments where adult educators are still committed to the fundamental ideals of the field.

*Readjusting the focus*

Welton (1995) argues that the great themes of adult education should be family, citizenship, social movements, work, and community life. Yet, to his chagrin, this barely defines a corner of adult education scholarship, and completely ignores the dominant discourse of institutional approaches to
program planning, teaching and learning and policy formation for various adult education systems. According to Welton:

*Thus, the boundary of the Discipline was drawn very narrowly around a set of professionalized practices and another 'expert culture' was constituted in an historical period of expansive welfare-state capitalism to take its place alongside so many other expert cultures (law, medicine, etc.) (p. 129).*

Welton also discusses the destruction of the dominant paradigm shaped by andragogy and lifelong learning, an individualistic rendering of self-directed learning, and a profession devoted to maintaining the status quo. Seen through the lens of critical theory of adult education, it is easy to see the unravelling of the field in the 1990s as demonstrated by the collapse of a few local adult education associations and the conflicted reflections of the participants of this study. Less clear is what we've achieved by the implosion of this paradigm. An old discredited definition of adult education may lie in ruins but what will take its place? We are now, and have been for at least a decade wading through the wrecks, looking for recognizable relics to preserve, and shovelling the rest to the dustbin of history. We may have even laid down a few foundations. But as for now, there is no beacon—no outlining figure on the horizon by which to chart a course.

But adult education is nothing if not a place to turn weaknesses into strengths. In the 1920s when Lindeman was attempting his description of what adult education was and where it fit in a social context, he was also drawing from
a range of disciplines and experiences. Though regarded as an adult educator and early defining voice in the field, he himself defied any easy categorization, transcending the boundaries as a social worker, community organizer, and philosopher. His own seminal work, *The Meaning of Adult Education*, the source of inspiration for generations of adult educators, has been criticized for not defining the field adequately enough (Smith, M. K., 2004). For many former PACE members who considered the revival of an adult education movement, the desire for a grassroots, messy, ill defined approach remained strong. If specialization had spelled the demise of PACE, why take that route? Adult education has always found its inspiration on the turf of the adult learner, whether it be community development, vocational education, training, literacy, or lifelong learning.

**Friends helping friends**

Many critiques of adult education take a very broad view of the field. It is examined within the context of the times, the social conditions, the economic imperatives of the day. At the same time, as so many interview participants indicated in their discussions about PACE, any success depended upon the ability of individuals to connect on a personal level in the way Barbara Clague describes:

> *It was so dependent on individuals. Individuals came, individuals stayed, individuals came to PACE meetings. I think mostly they wanted to see their friends. And the topic of the meeting was a cover. I mean, I’m sure it was of interest, but we’d always get pretty much the same core of people regardless of the topic. So I think it was, you know, let’s come and see our friends and see what they’re doing. But to put a huge amount of energy into that organization specifically was challenging for most people.*
This comment in some ways points to the heart of adult education, the original notion of friends helping friends. It is clear from many of the interviews that the personal connection was extremely significant and that PACE’s victories represented the combined efforts of people working together with common goals, enthusiasm, and energy. As Michael Clague suggests, any future success of an adult education association would depend not on one particular viewpoint of adult education, but on the interests of the individuals who are prepared to start a conversation:

"I'd work less on setting up a representative structure and more on inviting people who practice adult education, whatever levels, who have an interest in public policy and social justice and education and adult education to come together. And so the energy is spent in those areas."

(Michael Clague, 101)

Conclusion: the “parenthesis epoch” in adult education

The lifetime of PACE spanned a period of incredible change for adult education and its final decade came at a time that has been described as the “parenthesis epoch” of a paradigm shift for the field (Morin, 1998). What happens in this turbulent period, according to Morin, is persistent and frequent change amid a backdrop of crisis and disorientation. Of course, the hope is for a resultant “sudden revelation of a new universe, a new birth on an intellectual level” (p. 62) but this is something that is as yet unrealized.
The dissolution of the Pacific Association for Continuing Education reflects the effects of change. Adult and continuing education are in many ways vastly different from their earlier conceptions in the 1950s and 1960s. But these areas have not disappeared, and neither has the adult learner, nor the adult educator. It is still possible to "fall in with the adult educators" or join the network today, though the terrain is harder to discern. As Welton notes (1998a), we are not in the clear but rather "at best, we have a kind of moduled queasy hopefulness; at worst, a sense that 'life' has succumbed to the logic of the marketplace, and that the world has become more barbarous and hard hearted" (p. 365). What occurs in the history of PACE, however, is certainly something reflective of Morin's description, in which a group of adult educators sought to find meaning in their organization but ultimately decided to break apart in different directions but without a final great revelation. In the example of a single regional adult education association, the history of PACE offers a sharp focus on these struggles in a specific context. It takes into account regional considerations, the role of particular individuals in BC at the time, and the decisions made by a small group of members in PACE who sought to establish a voice for adult educators in a changing climate while at the same time staying faithful to the hallowed traditions that formed the foundation and direction of PACE throughout the 30 years of its existence.
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