1991

The application of stasis theory to the role of peer tutoring in writing centers

Carol Ann Wene Thom

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project

Part of the Rhetoric and Composition Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/756

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
THE APPLICATION OF STASIS THEORY TO THE
ROLE OF PEER TUTORING IN WRITING CENTERS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Carol Ann Wene Thom
November 1991
THE APPLICATION OF STASIS THEORY TO THE
ROLE OF PEER TUTORING IN WRITING CENTERS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Carol Ann Wene Thom
November 1991

Approved by:

Rodney Simard, Chair

Carol P. Haviland

Juan Delgado
ABSTRACT

Today, many colleges and universities seek to offer individual writing help to students through their writing centers, which are often staffed by peer tutors. These dedicated tutors, desiring to help their peers to become better writers through collaborative learning methods, deal with a diverse student population who are writing a variety of papers. In order to be totally effective, these peer tutors need to be versed in the many skills involved in dialoguing, or conversation, as well as in writing, or composition.

Stasis\(^1\) theory, a set of questions that pinpoint issues in an argument, is useful in improving both dialoguing and writing techniques. This theory can aid peer tutors to assist tutees to generate ideas, gather information, formulate theses, organize papers, discern issues, think critically, and explore both sides of an issue in an argument. This study looks at the classical, rhetorical art of stasis theory, in its historical context and its application today, and recommends that peer tutors should be instructed in stasis theory and that knowledge should be applied to their work with students in the writing center.

iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I entered and exited the Master of Arts in English Composition program backed by the kind support of Rodney Simard, and I extend my sincere appreciation to him. Carol Haviland gave me the training and the opportunity to participate as a peer tutor in the writing center, and I offer my gratitude to her. Juan Delgado affably accepted the task of becoming a reader on this thesis committee, and I give my thanks to him.

Also, I acknowledge the help of my husband, Bill Thom, for his patience and encouragement in listening to endless drafts of this thesis; my computer assistant, Pat Carney, for setting up my computer and for printing the finished copy of this paper; my parents, Elfrieda and Charles Wene, and my children, Belinda Thom and Kevin Thom, for their enthusiastic support; and my source of inspiration, the Lord, for giving me the motivation and determination to complete this composition.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE ................................................................. i
SIGNATURE PAGE ..................................................... ii
ABSTRACT ................................................................. iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................... iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..................................................... v
INTRODUCTION ............................................................. 1
CHAPTER ONE: WRITING CENTERS AND PEER TUTORS ............ 3
CHAPTER TWO: SOME CLASSICAL THEORIES OF STASES ........... 11
CHAPTER THREE: SOME MODERN THEORIES OF STASES .......... 23
CHAPTER FOUR: STASIS THEORY, PEER TUTORS, AND THE WRITING PROCESS ................................................. 43
CONCLUSION ............................................................... 87
FOOTNOTES ................................................................. 89
WORKS CITED ............................................................. 90
Introduction

Many students today have trouble expressing themselves in writing. These struggling writers create a special concern for English teachers who want to know how to generate interest in the subject of writing and how to spark the desire to write in their students. But these students need more than just enthusiasm and motivation to write well; they need additional help to become better writers. This is an established fact, reflected by the proliferation of developmental English classes, which concentrate on developing fundamental writing skills, currently offered by colleges and universities.

The reasons some student writers need extra instruction are many: some students are disadvantaged by a lack of knowledge of standard written English, and some just have internalized fears, anxieties, and feelings of inadequacy, frequently without real foundation. Other students are from other countries and lack native English speaking and writing skills. Some students have lost interest in improving their writing skills, either by an excess or a lack of composition, in the lower grades. And still other students need more assistance than one instructor can give to an individual learner in a large classroom.

All these reasons have contributed to a need for concentrated, individual attention, which has culminated in many institutions of higher learning attempting to provide
the solution to these problems through the one-on-one conferencing of the writing center. In this non-threatening setting, void of constraints imposed by teachers and other students, tutees can begin freely to address their own writing problems.

This study seeks to define and to illustrate the concept of the writing center and of those who often staff it, the peer tutors; to endorse the use of stasis theory, a set of questions that pinpoint the issues in an argument; to follow this theory through both classical and modern adaptations; and to give practical examples of the application of this theory to the peer tutoring role in the contemporary writing center.

Writers may use stasis theory to identify issues to explore, to structure their writing, and to reach logical conclusions in their arguments. This theory and its application is not a panacea for all problems student writers may have but is one method that peer tutors may use to help students in the writing center. When peer tutors apply the theory by using the stases questions, they will begin to show tutees how to discover what to say about their topics and how to organize their information. As the peer tutors become better equipped to guide tutees through the writing process, writing centers will also become more effective.
Chapter One
Writing Centers and Peer Tutors

Most colleges and universities today have a writing center on their campuses; yet these writing centers vary considerably, having diverse philosophies, clientele, staff, materials, methods, and goals. Therefore, one may well ask, what is a writing center?

Experts in writing instruction express differing opinions regarding the scope and content of writing centers and seem to disagree on a universal definition for these learning hubs. Because of their diversity, writing centers are indeed difficult to define. According to Linda Bannister-Willis, a writing center is a "learning-by-doing environment where students examine their writing and the writing of their peers without the threat of teacher evaluation or the fear of being unable to compete" (132). She views the writing center as a place where the student feels welcome and is comfortable, a place where "challenges can be met with decreased apprehension and where work is accomplished in a spirit of community" (132). She sees the writing center as a non-threatening environment for students, an environment in which they will be able to relax and concentrate on their writing, which may not be the case in their writing classrooms amongst their classmates.

Stephen North, in his article "The Idea of a Writing
Center," contends that many people thought of the "old writing centers" as "fix-it shops," but that we should think of the "new writing centers" as the place where people come to talk about their writing. The remedial image created by a "fix-it shop" label bothers North: "In a writing center the object is to make sure that writers are what gets changed by instruction. Our job is to produce better writers, not better writing" (438). He argues writing centers should concentrate on helping students improve their writing processes rather than concern themselves with the products the students produce.

Judith Summerfield, in concept, agrees with North's idea of a writing center as a place to talk, since she speaks of the "social nature of language and learning" (6). Summerfield emphasizes the community aspect of the writing center and contends that a true writing center constructs "a community of writers, readers, listeners, talkers [and] thinkers, who are encouraged to understand how they write as individuals, but equally important as members of a community" (6).

In "Theory and Reality: The Ideal Writing Center(s)," Muriel Harris mentions that one of the reasons why writing centers are so difficult to define is that they are always in a state of flux, striving to meet the growing and diverse needs of their users (5). She says that a few years ago the term writing lab would designate "materials-centered
facilities," such as computer programs, with an emphasis on helping "students produce correct finished products," while the other term writing center would name the place that "relies on tutorial instruction to assist students with the writing process" (6). But Harris perceives that this distinction has not come into being because "The 1984 Writing Lab Directory shows that few if any labs or centers rely mainly or solely on materials" (6). Harris sums up her ideas when she states that regardless of what these writing instruction areas are called the guiding principle must be that "the writing teacher must not be a judge, but a physician. His [or her] job is not to punish, but to heal" (5).

Diane George thinks of writing centers as places that address the "hard questions," places where "we send our students when we [teachers] are stumped" (49). Because writing centers are able to give students individual attention, tutors can concentrate on trying to help tutees solve their own difficult questions, which may require more time than a classroom teacher is able to devote to one student.

In this same vein, Tilly Warnock and John Warnock see the philosophical commitment to individual instruction through conference teaching as the one fundamental belief shared by the successful writing centers. This commitment to the individual results in growth from within and
encourages students to "imagine how they might 'rewrite' themselves and their worlds" (16).

In the struggle to define writing centers, Evelyn Ashton-Jones finds one aspect the experts can agree on: "Our major theorists do agree that writing centers exist primarily to further the cognitive growth of students through individualized, student-centered pedagogies" (30). Her interpretation is broad enough to foster agreement. Since writing centers, because of their diversity, lend themselves mainly to general explanations, I suggest another broad definition: writing centers are places that offer help to everyone--students and teachers alike--and those students who diligently seek their services may, through a concentrated effort, become more effective writers.

Though writing centers may defy easy definition, they are not a new concept. According to North, writing centers have been in existence in one form or another since "the 1930s when Carrie Stanley was already working with writers at the University of Iowa" (436). Yet writing centers have vastly increased because of the immense need during the 1970s when our colleges and universities initiated the open door policy of lowering their standards and accepting less qualified students.

Though some writing centers use strictly Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI), more centers rely on human interaction. As writing centers have expanded and their
numbers have grown, so have requirements for trained personnel to staff them, and some new innovations have developed. Though writing centers vary in the composition of their staffs—some centers use professors or professional tutors—Leonard Podis argues that peer tutors, a rather recent concept, are used in many colleges and universities because they can provide a less threatening environment, no authority figures, and cost-effective means, economical peer stipends, for these institutions to offer the special one-on-one help that many writers need, especially inexperienced ones, while also providing training for the peers (75).

The peer tutor is a student at the college or university, usually an undergraduate but in some cases a graduate student, who is trained to work with other students on a particular subject, in this case on the process of writing. The peer tutor may be more advanced or older but still functions as a student and encourages the tutees’ learning, not by adopting the role of the teacher but by fostering the unique peer situation, by making it a collaborative learning opportunity.

Thom Hawkins observes that, unlike a teacher, a peer tutor is still experiencing life as an undergraduate. This shared experience creates "an open, communicative atmosphere," since the tutee is more likely to feel equal to the peer tutor, even though the tutor may be "a more advanced student who has already gained a foothold in the
system" (30). The tutee sees the tutor as a role model because the student frequently desires to learn to compete successfully also. Even though the tutor is farther along in the system, both know that the peer tutor has not forgotten "what learning how to cope with the system is like. He [or she] is, from the tutee's point of view, both an insider and an outsider" (Hawkins 30). As they work together, they make up a social structure in which both can practice being insiders (30).

Through the use of dialogue, peer tutors relate to tutees as equals. John Trimbur regards conversation as "the only truly free market, an ideal discursive space where exchange without domination is possible, where social differences are converted into abstract equalities at the level of speech acts" (606).

According to Harris, "Peer tutors have a power--and responsibility--and a goal--of being other than a teacher" ("What's Up" 21). She argues that in many classrooms students do not have much opportunity to question, and that is why they often come to the writing center, docile and submissive. In the writing center these students are encouraged to shake their passivity and become involved in their own learning (21).

Kenneth Bruffee, in his study on peer tutoring at Brooklyn College, finds that many students who come to the writing center for help do not seem to know the subjects
they are studying well enough to be able to write about them. Yet these same students can become insiders, for when given "the opportunity to talk with sympathetic peers," they are able "to discover knowledge they did not know they had" (451). Hawkins conveys that often insecure and inexperienced writers benefit from the closeness of the peer relationship as the tutor aids the student by opening up what seems to the tutee to be an elite, undecipherable secret code, the combination of standard English grammar and formal usage. The tutor can be a bridge, spanning the distance between language systems when students have nonstandard English dialects or English as their second language. He asserts, "Tutors step in and create a receptive audience, sometimes overcoming years of misguided effort" (28).

Gloria Nardini explains the word peer in another way. She defines peer to mean "equal," not "expert." Nardini contends one important difference between the peer tutor and the teacher is that the tutor will not measure the composition of the student with the perfection of some ideal text, an equation the student in all probability will not achieve. "Rather, tutors are a living, breathing audience who help negotiate appropriate task definition, who aid in invention, who focus upon clarity, and who create a setting that makes writing real and immediate" (14).

Writing centers, peer tutors, and stasis theory are not
new concepts, yet they may be combined to form a working team. Writing centers are the place where peer tutors do their work, helping tutees learn to improve their writing, and stasis theory is a tool they may use to accomplish this task. Peer tutors' tasks may be made more effective if they will use the stases questions of stasis theory, whenever applicable, as they encourage tutees through the following stages of the writing process: the brain-storming or prewriting stage, when writers first gather their thoughts and use invention or heuristic strategies to organize their ideas; the writing or drafting stage, when writers actually form their compositions; and the rewriting or revision stage, when writers rethink and rewrite their information and edit their completed compositions. These stages of the writing process are recursive, not linear; thus writers will move forward or revert backward to whatever steps new discoveries take them.
Chapter Two
Some Classical Theories of Stases

Since the word stasis, also spelled staseis and status, is more comprehensive than the terms writing center or peer tutor, I will cover this concept more thoroughly, not attempting to provide a complete historical background, highlighting some of the forms stasis theory has taken as it has developed:

Stasis is the Greek term for the main point at issue in a legal argument (the Latin term is constitutio); who has done what, when, and how. Some theorists further narrow the definition to the starting point of a case—the circumstances that give rise to it—or to the first point raised by an opponent in a legal case. (Lahham 111)

The Indo-Germanic root word of status, STA, means "to stand" (Dieter 347). "Plato clearly explains stasis as . . . the negative of the verb to go, the opposite of walking, going, or moving, that is to say, as standing still" (Dieter 348).

The term stasis developed out of Aristotle's theories of physical science and gave rhetoricians "the ultimate basis for their art" (Dieter 353). In Books V-VIII of his Physics, Aristotle sets forth his theory of motion or kinesis, the antithesis of stasis. He declares that "movements with intervals of rest are not single but many; and therefore any movement broken up by a standstill . . . is neither single nor continuous" (228b7). Otto Dieter interprets Aristotle to mean that "Stasis is that which disrupts, or severs motion and robs it of its continuity
... divides motion into two movements, and separates the two from one another" (349-50).

For Aristotle, the concept of stasis means a short stop or a pause that naturally occurs in an argument between the motion that arises from conflicting points of view. Each question or stock issue that "arises" from a contrary position results in a stasis until it is "addressed and resolved" (Katula 184). Stock issues, the frequent questions occurring in the process of argumentation, when focused on a topic, lead to the crucial points of disagreement. "When followed rigorously, stock issues move an argument to its critical junctures and lead to the point on which the issue must ultimately be decided by the audience" (Katula 184).

Aristotle sees kinesis, or motion, "as the actualization of any potential" and stasis, or the absence of motion, "as the opposite of any such actualization." Aristotle observes that many natural actualizations transpire in life; for example, water can freeze and become ice and then change back into water again. For Aristotle, actualizations occur in only four categories: Being (changes in and out of existence) and Quantity, Quality, and Place (changes in movements and contrary motions back and forth)
Dieter believes that the classical rhetoricians, in observing Aristotle’s physical philosophy, especially his concept of stasis, which is an integral part of his theory of motion, found a scientific theory on which they could base their rhetoric (352). Four stock issues or questions that developed from Aristotle’s four categories are:

1. Is it? [Genus]
2. What it is? [Definition]
3. Has it any [Nonessential Quality] attributes?
4. Why has it these [Coincidental Quality] attributes?

(Wallace 108; Nadeau, "Hermogenes" 382)

According to Katula, these stases questions were used in rhetorical presentations, especially the forensic proceedings of the court in Aristotle’s time (185). Kathryn Raign asserts that both classical and modern rhetoricians both "agree that a stasis or issue, no matter when it occurs, is always presented as a question," and the rhetorician who successfully stays or "solves the issue presented in the question removes the stasis and is able to present the argument in his or her favor" (43).

A Greek rhetorician who practiced in the second century BC and whose theories were rooted in Aristotle’s theories, Hermagoras, views staseis as "... the subject of debate or the point of contention in a legal action" (Lanham 62). He contends that these disagreements can arise and a particular stasis is evident when "two contesting parties have
diametrically opposed answers" to a stock question, also known as a stasis question (Nadeau, "Hermogenes'" 373-74). Hermagoras proposed four types of issues that seem to be a variation of Aristotle's categories and were used "by students and citizens preparing forensic speeches" (Raign 49):

1. Conjectural: dispute over a fact
2. Definitional: dispute over a definition
3. Qualitative: dispute over the value, quality, or nature of an act—[person or thing] (Nadeau 57)
4. Translative: dispute over moving the issue [or objection] from one court or jurisdiction to another (Nadeau, "Classical Systems" 54; Lanham 62)

For example, if I as a writer were to use the above stock questions for the basis of my argument and want to argue that dogs in our town are not being leashed in compliance with the existing leash law, I would have to supply some evidence of or facts about the problem, define the what (or who) of the problem (my source), show the extent of the problem (the seriousness), and demonstrate that perhaps another authority needs to handle the problem.

Hermagoras was the first rhetorician to conceptualize existing stasis theory and to divide the questions that the orator used into two classifications: definite questions or hypothesis and indefinite questions or thesis (Raign 38). The definite question or hypothesis deals with specifics, such as "Should I become a writer?" And the indefinite question or thesis deals with generalities, such as "Should
a woman become a writer?" Hermagoras, believing there are two kinds of questions, definite (hypothesis) and indefinite (thesis), creates an ongoing relationship between the two, demonstrating their closeness. He uses hypothesis, or the specific question, as the basis of his stasis theory (Raign 39). "Basically, the questions of stasis allow the rhetorician to discover the major issue of a given topic, and the thesis allows him or her to express it" (Raign 50).

Kathryn Raign gives three reasons why Hermagoras' work on stasis is significant: first, that he conceptualizes stasis theory, "making it easily accessible for rhetorical use." Second, that Cicero and Quintilian use his work as the basis for their own stases theories, and third that he is "the first to divide the questions concerning the orator into [generalities] thesis and [particulars] hypothesis" (53).

Writers who came after Hermagoras can be divided into two categories: "(1) the greater number who followed his lead by including objection as the fourth major stasis, and (2) a smaller number who reduced the number of major stases to three" (Nadeau, "Hermogenes" 378). Cicero, a Roman rhetorician of the first century BC, coming after Hermagoras, uses only three questions and divides thesis into two kinds:

... one is a matter of learning--its object is knowledge, for instance, whether the reports of the senses are true; the other is a matter of action--
which is directed to doing something, for instance . . . the services by which friendship has to be cultivated. Then again the former knowledge falls into three classes—{(1) does a thing exist or does it not? (2) what is it? (3) what are its qualities? The first is the question of reality—e.g. does justice exist in nature or is it merely a convention? The second one [is a question] of definition—e.g. is justice the advantage of the majority? The third is a question of quality—e.g. is it advantageous to live justly or is it not? (De Inventione XVIII.62)

Cicero not only argues for using three stases questions in De Inventione, but in De Oratore he has one of his protagonists, Marcus Antonius, use the dialectical form of discourse, to "argue [the subject, what makes an orator?] pro and con and then find the stasis . . . the issue at doubt, the precise point on which the dispute seems to turn" (Sloane 466). The other protagonist, Crassus, agrees with this manner of debating: ". . . we must argue every question on both sides, and bring out on every topic whatever points can be deemed plausible . . . " (Cicero, De Oratore XXXIV.159). They argue whether an orator needs philosophical skills.

Cicero indicates that theses or general questions are normally associated with philosophy and the use of dialectic not stasis theory, which normally involves a particular individual or occasion "with the cause or case, in the legal sense" (Raign 64). In De Partitione, Cicero realizes that when he asks students to speak or write on a certain topic, he is not only teaching them "to find all the available
means of persuasion, but also to search for knowledge in the manner of the philosophers," like Plato and others, who search for knowledge through dialectic to find truth by arguing both sides of an issue (Raign 64). Cicero concludes that stases questions can be a valuable tool in this search for knowledge because they focus on the heart of an issue and lead to exploring both sides of an argument. "So in effect, Cicero removed stasis from the realm of the courtroom and placed it in the classroom" (Raign 65). Gage argues that in classical times stasis encompassed "dialectical intentions with the mutual objective amongst the participants being the discovery of probable truth as well as real knowledge" (158). Cicero was definitely interested in this search for knowledge.

Quintilian, a Roman rhetorician of the first century AD, was greatly influenced by both Hermagoras and Cicero. In adopting Cicero's stasis and thesis theory, he "added examples that were useful in clarifying the working of the theory, and further emphasized the role of the thesis in writing of both a philosophical and argumentative nature" (Raign 68).

Would Quintilian adopt four questions in his stasis theory like Hermagoras or three like Cicero? Quintilian accommodated both: fitting into the first category in his early life, and the second later, for Quintilian trimmed his stock questions from his original four to only three. In
his mature life, he decided that inquiry in every case is based on the following three categories of issues: Conjecture, Definition, and Quality.

1. Whether a thing is? (Conjecture)
2. What it is? (Definition)
3. What kind it is? (Quality)

He sees nature herself as imposing these questions upon us, for Quintilian argues that there must be a subject, whether it is, before we can answer what it is and what kind it is. "But even when it is clear that a thing is, it is not immediately obvious what it is. And when we have decided what it is, there remains the question of its quality" (144). He affirms that once these three questions are answered, there is no need for any further question (144).

Quintilian states that all questions, whether definite (which he calls cases, concerning the particular) or indefinite (which he calls theses, concerning the general), come under the above three categories in every kind of discourse, whether demonstrative, deliberative, or forensic, and apply to both rational and legal questions (144). Questions concerning "what is written are questions of law," or legal questions, and those questions concerning "what is not written are questions of fact," or rational questions (Raign 68). Thus, according to Raign, the stases questions are useable with all types of subjects and "for writing of all kinds, be it philosophical or argumentative, further evidence of the stasis theory's power" (75).

18
The classical rhetoricians classified the oral skill of argumentation into three categories: demonstrative, deliberative, and forensic. Even through the term epideictic, or demonstrative speech, has had many different meanings throughout history, in the times of the classical rhetoricians it referred to issues in the present and could be thought of as "a speech of display," whereas forensic speech referred to issues in the past, and deliberative speech referred to issues in the future (Nadeau, "Classical Systems" 57). Lanham defines epideictic or panegyric speech as "to blame or commemorate," as to praise, which is used at special occasions; deliberative speech as "to exhort or dissuade," which is used in political speeches; and forensic as "to accuse or defend," which is used in judicial speeches (106). Though stasis theory was used mainly in forensic argumentation in classical times, its usage can be expanded, as Nadeau shows in his statement:

If strictly epideictic speeches . . . are not the natural habitat of stasis, open contradiction of a speaker's evaluation of a person or thing [as in the third stock question of stasis theory] could certainly occur as a part of the deliberative or forensic process, and the inclusion of epideictic elements in these modes was common. ("Classical Systems" 57)

Therefore, in the time of classical rhetoric, stasis theory did extend beyond the rigid boundaries of the courtroom setting.

Nadeau explicates further this expanded use of stasis
theory in a chart showing the Hermagorean stasis at the
quality or third question level.

Hermagorean Stasis At The Qualitative Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Poιώτης</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About a person</td>
<td>abouta person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About things to be sought and avoided</td>
<td>aboutthings to be sought and avoided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial</td>
<td>Judicial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Epideictic)</td>
<td>(Epideictic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peri proosópon</td>
<td>peri proosópon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deliberative)</td>
<td>(Deliberative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peri aíreítων kai fευκτών</td>
<td>peri aíreítων kai fευκτών</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>Justification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No wrong admitted)</td>
<td>(No wrong admitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Epideictic)</td>
<td>(Epideictic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deliberative)</td>
<td>(Deliberative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Forensic)</td>
<td>(Forensic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πραγματική</td>
<td>δικαιολογητική</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wrong admitted)</td>
<td>(Wrong admitted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Epideictic)</td>
<td>(Epideictic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deliberative)</td>
<td>(Deliberative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Forensic)</td>
<td>(Forensic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αντίθεσις</td>
<td>αντίθεσις</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifting blame</td>
<td>Shifting blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for one's act to some other person or thing)</td>
<td>(for one's act to some other person or thing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μετάστασις</td>
<td>μετάστασις</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-charge</td>
<td>Counter-charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(against one affected as deserving injury)</td>
<td>(against one affected as deserving injury)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>διάγγελημα</td>
<td>διάγγελημα</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter-plea</td>
<td>Counter-plea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(through a claim of benefit rendered)</td>
<td>(through a claim of benefit rendered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αντίστασις</td>
<td>αντίστασις</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plea for leniency</td>
<td>Plea for leniency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nadeau, &quot;Classical Systems&quot; 56)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the last significant classical rhetoricians is
Hermogenes of Tarsus, who lived in the second century AD and
who "demonstrates the division of stages and adds examples"
to Hermagoras' "fundamental theory of stases" (Nadeau,
"Hermogenes" 385). Further, Hermogenes extended Hermagoras' "forensic standard pattern to be followed by 'prosecutors' and 'defendants' . . . to include directives for proponents and opponents in a deliberative situation." Then Hermagoras' legal questions "become legal stases in Hermogenes (some writers as early as the first century BC had so considered
them)." The final revisions Hermogenes made in Hermagoras' theory of stasis are lengthening "the list of questions incapable of stasis" (asystatic) and adding "three questions close to being incapable of stasis [near-asystatic]; both of these lists possibly were in the public domain at the time" (Nadeau, "Hermogenes" 385).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hermogenes' Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incapable of Stasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asystatic Questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Deficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Balanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. One-sided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inconclusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hermagoras' Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incapable of Stasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asystatic Questions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. One-sided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Balanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reversible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inconclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Incredible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Despicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Deficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Near-Asystatic Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preponderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ill-advised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prejudged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Nadeau, "Classical Systems" 70)

Raign says Hermogenes' system of stasis is important to study because it has continued on throughout the centuries. His On Stasis has been translated frequently and is still available in scholarly libraries today (Raign 80).

The stases theories of some of these great classical rhetoricians--Aristotle, Hermagoras, Cicero, Quintilian, and Hermogenes--illustrate how these classical theories of stases build upon each other, becoming useful strategies for locating arguments. Modern variations of stasis theory, adding to these classical systems, can be useful in the
writing center as tools for peer tutors to assist students in their efforts to learn to become proficient writers. Stasis theory today is applicable to the modern teaching of writing, especially for use by peer tutors in the setting of the writing center.
Chapter Three
Some Modern Theories of Stases

Is it?—is stasis theory still used today and, therefore, relevant in the teaching of writing and applicable for use by peer tutors in the modern writing center? I believe it is. Presently, stasis theory is not a part of most students' repertoire of knowledge, yet it still has remnants in our modern curricula. Raign states that modern textbooks often disguise or disable stasis theory by presenting the theory as something else, like "a simple formula for determining the mode of the piece of writing" (172). But no matter how contemporary authors cloak, absorb, or change it into other concepts, we can still find traces of classical stasis in our modern theories and pedagogies about invention and discovery. Janice Lauer reports that over twenty years ago she could find no sections on invention and stasis in textbooks, but today there are "sections entitled 'invention,' 'prewriting,' and 'planning'" (127).

What is invention? In Research in Written Composition, Richard Hillock states that in ancient times, rhetoricians would develop arguments through the first division of rhetorical theory, invention (164). However, today the term is used in a more general manner to include a variety of approaches--free writing, inquiry, heuristics or problem-solving approaches, and "variations in the conditions of
writing assignments"—which educators seem to think are "useful in generating and/or processing the substance of a piece of writing" (164). Further, Lanham defines invention as the Greek "heurisis," which means "discovery, invention" (53-61). And Janice M. Lauer calls status "the invention art of beginning well" (128).

If stasis theory is used today, how do we value it—what is its quality? Lauer observes that various threads of ancient stasis theory run through the modern texts that stimulate students to begin meaningful discourse. Lauer reports that one way teachers can accomplish this objective is to help the students formulate questions that will guide them through their puzzlement, or dissonance stage, of their writing processes. This dissonance stage is the period before writers know what they want to say.

Lauer observes in modern texts another method that can be traced back to stasis theory, that aids students in selecting and then narrowing topics into manageable subjects. She finds that Writing with a Purpose instructs writers to locate "real subjects within general subjects"; Process and Thought in Composition talks about "selecting and limiting as a way to begin"; and Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student points student writers "to select and narrow using the classical procedure, status, as a way of initiating persuasive discourse" (129).

Writing in the same vein, Richard M. Coe presents
another method of teaching students how to focus their topics through learning new writing skills, suggesting that this method has "ancient antecedents," which we recognize from the ancient theory of stasis and "has recently been derived from problem-solving" (274). The steps he suggests for students to proceed in this method are: 1. While looking for material for their topics—either assigned or chosen—students concentrate on a "problem;" and 2. They look for at least two problems that are either self-contradictory or contradict each other. "Sometimes the 'problem' takes the form of an apparent 'fact' which seems to contradict an established principle; other times it involves two statements of the same level of generality" (274-75). Coe's method encourages students to investigate more than one side of an issue.

John T. Gage takes a negative view on the current use of invention and stasis theory, for he asserts that modern writers have altered the purposes of classical rhetoric. He believes that classical invention was not used to find what to say, as we use the concept of invention today, but was used to settle disagreements by investigating possible solutions to a particular question. He thinks Aristotle's topoi, lists of stock or frequently used topics, were used to find answers to questions, not as invention techniques to locate a subject as is done today (158-59). He argues that when stasis theory as a means of invention followed disputed
questions, as it did in classical rhetoric, the intention of finding solutions for "conflicts of knowledge" was the combined intention of the audience and the writer; "no means of inventing an intention" was needed. Gage believes that when invention turns to "practice using predefined forms," such as heuristics, then the writer must be taught how "to discover a subject" (166-67). Thus Gage argues that our modern invention strategies stifle intention in writing.

Another critic of modern theories of rhetoric, Thomas Sloane contends that today we have revived the topics but have eliminated the analytical function of finding the question and debating both sides of an issue, "voicing the multiplicity of issues until the stasis, the point of crucial difference is reached, the point beyond which discussion cannot proceed until agreement—between people—is attempted." He believes that at this point the student is ready to begin writing or speaking. Therefore, Sloane avows that the revival of rhetoric is "relevant" but not "complete" (467). He states that Cicero's last book, Topics, much like Aristotle's listing of the topoi, might seem like a "modern listing of places of invention but it was actually framed with a single purpose: to make it possible for the orator to argue either side of any question." According to Sloane, this purpose has been overlooked in our modern heuristics, our attempt to revive topical invention (470).
Other writers have a more positive view of the modern use of invention than either Gage or Sloane. They may not use the term "stasis" in their texts, but they do encourage the process of looking at both sides of an argument. One of the modern textbooks many colleges and universities use that takes a balanced look at the subject of writing arguments is Rise B. Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper's *St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. These authors encourage writers to anticipate "counterarguments," their audience's responses, in their writing and to build "a bridge of shared concerns between writer and reader" (509). They also encourage writers to "refute their readers' objections in a spirit of shared inquiry in solving problems, establishing probable causes, deciding the value of something, or understanding all the issues in a controversy" (512-13).

Getting closer to the concept of stasis theory, Geoffrey Mangum and Anne Mangum encourage teachers to teach their students ways to develop forensic skills in "invention, organization and expression of arguments" (43). They do not mention the concept of stasis, yet they talk about finding the issue by examining the argument for three categories of issues: definition, precedent, and public policy, and discovering the arguments for each issue (49).

Katula and Roth state that in a written argument the stasis or potential points of conflict must be identified and covered in the discourse so that the readers have
something on which to base their judgments. They believe that stock issues, or questions that frequently arise in an argument, applied to a topic help writers to formulate questions opponents may ask and help critics to ask pertinent questions regarding an issue (184). They suggest that the stock issue approach has been renewed by some contemporary writers, and many texts that cover debating give variations on a "basic three question stock issue format: need, plan, and benefits" (185). These stock issue systems become a type of heuristic and focus on deliberative argument, the kind the average person uses, not legal, forensic rhetoric (185).

Regarding the subject of stock questions, Hultzen argues that the ancient forensic stock systems of stasis theory differ considerably from the questions of future fact used in our modern deliberative arguments. He proposes an analytical scheme for deliberative argument that will, in his opinion, be as effective as the classical status was for forensic argument. However, I perceive one drawback to his ideas; he argues that his method would need to be inclusive culturally, and be the only system practiced, to provide continuity in debates. I do not think he would ever be able to obtain this exclusive consensus his system requires. His stock issues consist of the following four questions:

1. Is there an ill in the present state of affairs?
2. Is this ill curable?
3. Will the proposed remedy actually cure us of this ill?
4. Will the cure cost too much? (Katula 186)

Katula says that sound arguments start by posing relevant questions and by looking at both sides of an issue, and stock issues are one tool to invoke questions that lead to organized response (194).

The Speech Teacher journal has been the forum for an argument over the merits of debating one or two sides of an issue. Richard Murphy, in his article "The Ethics of Debating Both Sides," argues against the practice of speech students being forced to defend both sides of an issue, because then they will have to argue against their own beliefs on one side of the issue, which he contends will create insincerity (2). Don Geiger, in proper dialectical manner, takes up the debate in his essay "The Humanistic Direction of Debate" and proposes that the humanistic value of students' perspectives are broadened by their having to wrestle with important and difficult ethical and political questions (103).

I agree with Geiger, as does Moffett. In Teaching the Universe of Discourse, Moffett argues that it is not difficult for students to take a position—that skill does not need teaching—but what students must learn "is the sense of alternative possibilities and the reasons for choosing one over another" (97). A collaboration of open
minds has always been an ingredient in real truth-seeking and "requires a willingness to be influenced, reciprocity, which is a strength not a weakness" (97). What leads to many of our international deadlocks is that "one wants to manipulate the other fellow and remain unchanged oneself. This sort of 'debate' is mere propaganda" (97). Moffett is arguing for the type of debate that looks at both sides of the issue with the objective of seeking knowledge and real truth. Preconceived beliefs and stubbornness of attitude have no place in a dialectical argument where the purpose is to arrive at truth, because one needs to be free to adopt new ideas that may be more valid than prior ones. When one is open to new views, growth may occur, a necessity in competent writing.

There is, however, one modern writer, Edward P. J. Corbett, who boldly uses the ancient word "status" and explains this concept as a part of the invention process in his textbook, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student. Through presenting the concept of status, Corbett encourages students to convert their subjects into theses statements by forming "a proposition, a complete sentence that asserts or denies something about the subject" (32). He introduces the students to Quintilian's status model of three questions: "An sit (whether a thing is)—a question of fact, quid sit (what is it?)—a question of definition, and quale sit (what kind is it?)—a question of quality" (33). In his textbook,
Corbett shows an example of how the three questions might have been used in the murder trial of Brutus.

1. Did Brutus, as has been alleged, kill Caesar? (whether a thing is?)
2. If it is granted that Brutus did kill Caesar, was the act murder or self-defense? (what it is?)
3. If it was in fact murder, was Brutus justified in murdering Caesar? (what kind is it?) (33)

Corbett reminds his students that they must consider not only the subject matter but also the occasion or current situation and audience to determine which of the three questions applies to their papers, helping them "to define the aspect of the subject that is to be discussed. Once that aspect has been determined, the students should be prepared to formulate a thesis sentence" (34-35). Corbett might have directed students to use the stases questions to full advantage if he presented them as a recursive heuristic, with students moving from one question to another to discover all the issues in their arguments, but rather he encourages students to hone in on only one of the questions in preparing to write a thesis statement.

Two writers who do promote a recursive use of the stases questions are Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor. In their article "Toward a Modern Theory of Stasis," they, like Corbett, also advocate the use of classical stasis and propose ways to modify it to make it relevant to almost any modern invention context (217). They point out some of classical stasis' attributes: 1. Stasis theory is
recursive. "At any point, a question about any issue can interrupt the discussion of any other, sending the whole procedure back through another round of establishing facts, definitions, evaluations, and jurisdictions" (218). 2. They argue the recursiveness of the theory points to its flexibility, which they see as one of its strengths. The questions become more complex, evoking counter-arguments at each stage, which means that "the stases can lead the rhetor to an enriched invention strategy, not a limited one" (218). 3. The questions are hierarchical; one leads to the next. Yet this attribute does not confine the questions to a sequential order. "You can ignore the lower stases if you assume them" (219). I agree with Fahnestock and Secor that the stases questions have the most power when they are used recursively, moving up and down to uncover all the points of contention hidden in the topic.

In order to apply the stases to a larger context than just the courtroom setting and to institute them into an invention strategy, Fahnestock and Secor advocate combining the first two stases questions in applicable cases. Although the questions "Is it?" and "What it is?" certainly look like questions in different categories, occasionally little essential difference exists between arguments claiming that something exists and those claiming that something can be labeled in a certain way (220). They argue that sometimes the second stasis question "reaches
down into the first," and they illustrate this point using the Viking Space Probe landing on Mars to answer the first stasis question of fact: "Is there life here?" A robot arm scooped up samples of soil and submitted them to three tests. . . . But these three tests for the existence of life on Mars depended on a definition of life on earth . . . ." (220). In this case the first stasis question of fact--Is it?--is dependent upon the second stasis question of definition--What it is?

Although arguments about facts and arguments about definitions use both definition and verification warrants [or rationale], the warrant that is emphasized or backed will differ. Arguments in the first stasis will tend to assume warrants of definition and establish verification [or fact], while arguments in the second stasis will tend to assume verification and argue definition. . . . One reason for preserving the distinction between the first two stases is to account for such differences in emphasis between verification and definition. But a reason for compounding the first two stases into one is to remind us that when we argue in the first stasis that something occurred or did not occur, is or is not a fact, we must still be alert for definitions that cannot be assumed. (220-21)

Though the first two stases questions--of fact and of definition--may sometimes appear to be redundant, there are cases when they remain distinct. If I were to argue that former President Reagan is a comedian because he has a knack for witty remarks, I would need rationales in this case of both fact and definition, because the term comedian does not control verifying what Reagan has said "the way the definition of ‘life’ directs inquiry in the Viking Space
Fahnestock and Secor propose a modification of stasis theory that they contend will make it vital and compatible with contemporary discourse. They offer the suggestion of inserting a new question before the stasis of quality that will address the issue of cause—"What caused it?" They argue that this question is necessary to focus on the modern fields of politics and the social and natural sciences.

Fahnestock and Secor state that the ancient rhetoricians did not ignore the question of cause in their courts since "questions in the first or second stasis were often formulated using terms suggesting cause or motivation" (221). Even in our modern courtrooms the distinction between fact and cause can become indistinct because "where a person is on trial for a deed, act and cause are often one, the notion of cause already embedded in our labels for human actions" (221).

These two writers contend that outside the courts, where matters are not restricted to individuals or human agents, cause can become a separate question and requires a different rationale and a different line of argument. "We cannot always support a causal proposition by demonstrating [the relationship] the compatibility or set-relatedness of a subject and predicate as we can in a definition argument." (Fahnestock 221). For example, the second question of stasis—What it is? (definition)—in the argument of
Caesar's murder—If it is granted that Brutus did kill Caesar, was the act murder or self-defense?—shows that murder and self-defense can both belong to the same set, killing, and most jurors at that trial would agree that either murder or self-defense are compatible with the category, killing. Fahnestock and Secor argue that sometimes we must "assume or demonstrate a warrant of agency" or relationship between the subject and predicate (221). They give examples of radical intellectual revolutions—Darwin's theory of natural selection and Stanley Fish's reader-response literary criticism technique—that would require arguing the agent or the cause into place because these concepts have been considered unconventional ideas (222). Fahnestock and Secor state that when an audience is not homogeneous, sharing values or meanings of words from the same culture like the Roman jurors in Brutus' trial, then they may not "naturally share assumptions about [their relationship] what can cause [things to happen] . . . . But if we cannot assume that our audience will recognize the agency we want to appeal to, we have to argue it into place" (221).

Of the fourth stasis, Fahnestock and Secor say, "It seems the least salvageable for a modern, field-independent theory of invention until we remember the exact context in which it was used and that it corresponds to a common form of argument, the proposal or policy argument, the call for
action" (222). Overall, they find the stases a powerful tool to help guide us through arguments to see what happens in the full rhetorical situation of arguer, audience, and the occasion or situation (223). When writers use the stases questions to focus on the issues of their arguments, they will be forced to consider not only their own points of view but also opposing ones that their readers may embrace and all conditions that may be pertinent to their arguments.

Kathryn Raign reports that in 1982 Fahnestock and Secor published a textbook, A Rhetoric of Argument, that she hoped would effectively present their modern theory of stasis mentioned in their prior article, but she was shocked that the book did not even mention the term stasis in spite of their considerable knowledge "about the theory and its origins." Raign expresses regret that by ignoring stasis theory's capabilities and possibilities, they did not effectively apply their knowledge of the theory to teaching. She thinks that they "have oversimplified the stasis theory to the point that it has lost its value as a heuristic and has become another way of teaching modes of writing" (155).

Like Fahnestock and Secor, Corbett also addresses the issue of cause, only he introduces the concept in his section on "The Topics" and under the subtopic "Special Topics for Judicial Discourse." When he introduces the concept of status, the idea is presented to help students to
formulate theses statements. Also, he suggests that "some of the topics" could be used "to develop the subject" (35).

Linda Woodson in her A Handbook of Modern Rhetorical Terms defines the topics as "A way of thinking about a given subject, or a general head under which arguments are grouped for a particular subject," such as cause and effect, class, and comparison (64). And Lanham in his A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms states that for Aristotle, as for rhetoricians who followed him, the topics have been "both the stuff of which arguments are made and the form of those arguments" (99). He asserts that Aristotle distinguished the general topics that were "applicable to all subjects alike, from those that could be applied only to a specific subject or question" (99). Later, more common usage of these general topics has confused them with the "commonplace observations or literary situations; both are part of that planned spontaneity which was an orator's principal means of dazzling his audience" (100).

Corbett reports in the section of his textbook entitled "The Topics" and the subtopic "Special Topics for Judicial Discourse" that the Latin rhetoricians, in attempting to discover the issue or thesis, asked the following "three questions about the general subject: whether a thing is (an sit), what it is (quid sit), and of what kind it is (guale sit)" (137). When the issue has been finally settled, then, "the pleader, either for the defense or for the prosecution,
can determine the special topics that will be pertinent to the development of the case" (137). Corbett groups the sub-topics under three questions—"A. Whether Something Happened" [evidence, or fact], B. What It Is [definition], and C. The Quality of What Happened, [motives or causes of action]" (137-38). All three of these writers, Fahnestock, Secor, and Corbett, find the issue of cause an important consideration in argumentation, and so do I in proposing my own theory of stasis.

This review of some of the modern thought on the teaching of invention, in current textbooks and professional journals, seems to indicate that interest is renewed in the concepts presented in classical stasis, whether or not the writers actually use the term stasis. But the dialectic continues; because the issue has two sides, many educators cannot agree about how to teach invention and stases theories. This is not surprising; even the classical rhetoricians, like Hermagoras and Quintilian, could not agree on the number of questions in their own stases theories. And today we cannot agree whether students should be forced or encouraged to defend both sides of an issue in an argument, as seen in the dialectical arguments in the journal articles between Don Geiger and Richard Murphy. What is clear, however, is that stasis theory, despite its sometimes truncated and masked appearance—whether we call it selecting a topic or narrowing one—is at the heart of
teaching argumentation today and will be for a long time to come.

In writing this chapter on the modern use of stasis theory, I have attempted to follow loosely the stases questions as a heuristic for my organization. The form that I pursue in this chapter could be considered meta-stasis—taking the stases questions and using them on the subject of stasis itself. For example, I employ the first question of stasis theory—"whether a thing is"—by asking, "Is it?—is stasis theory still used today, and, therefore, relevant in the teaching of writing and applicable for use by peer tutors in the modern writing center?" I answer "yes."

Then using the second stasis question—"what a thing is"—I define invention and only briefly mention stasis, assuming I have covered the definition of stasis theory adequately in Chapter Two on classical stasis. The third question—"What kind it is?"—takes me into the area of quality and how we value the theory of stasis today, as I consider many different writers' views. When I find myself getting involved in the topics, I revert back to the second stasis of definition to define that term.

For the fourth question of stasis—"What action should be taken?"—I would propose that we begin to include stasis theory into our English and composition classes for teaching students how to write arguments, organize papers, and explore both sides of an issue, beginning at the entry level.
in high school, or earlier. Stasis theory should be included in the training of peer tutors as one method they can use in helping students in writing centers to focus their papers and to become better writers. But before this can happen, tutors and teachers must rediscover stasis theory and equip themselves with a working knowledge of its concepts.

Because of the subjective and individual nature of writing processes, conscientious tutors and teachers will be eager to avail themselves of all techniques that may prove useful in helping students learn to become proficient writers. As Rodney Simard states in "Assessing a New Professional Role: The Writing Center Tutor," "perceptive tutors early realize that much of the burden of responsibility falls on them for the improvement and review of their basic teaching skills" (198).

Peer tutors will not need to dig too deeply into the technical aspects of stasis theory, thereby perhaps complicating it and making the theory unapproachable for students. What I believe they need to do is--as Thoreau said, "simplify"--to simplify stasis theory and extract its useable forms, as I do in this study. If tutors can make the stases concepts approachable, then students, once they grasp them, will see aspects of stasis theory applicable to many situations in life. These students will not only learn to write better but will also learn to think more critically
as they creatively apply the stases questions to other arguments that concern them. Like Calvin in the following "Calvin and Hobbes" cartoon, students will begin to see two sides of an issue more often.

Richard Basgall in "On Teaching Relationships" speaks of freeing students, first year college students in particular, of preconceived ideas by helping them to see that more than one perspective or side to many issues exist. He feels that beginning students' essays are often filled with unoriginal ideas, "borrowed ideas that have not been thought through and made their own or they reflect attitudes and thinking habits that are rigid and unreceptive to new and possibly more useful ways of seeing the world and responding to it" (184). He realizes that opening up new vistas to students may be frightening at first, but such an approach will help to prepare them to see new perspectives in their various disciplines and help them to progress in
their thinking so that they will be able to experience new thoughts and personal creativity, a necessity for mature writing (184).

Peer tutors may, using some of the concepts of stasis theory, help students in the writing center to progress in their thinking, to experience new thoughts and personal creativity that will help them to grow in their writing ability, as they aid students in the various stages of the writing process.
Chapter Four

Stasis Theory, Peer Tutors, and the Writing Process

One of the main ways peer tutors help students in the writing center is through the individualized dialogue that occurs in the tutoring sessions as the tutors guide students through the various stages of the writing process: prewriting, writing, and rewriting. These conversations with tutors help students in the prewriting stage, to organize their thoughts and focus their attention on the requirements of the assignments through incubation, and to generate ideas through invention; in the writing stage, to organize and articulate concepts through drafting; and in the rewriting stage, to receive reader-based feedback through revision, and to locate areas that need to be changed through editing. As I take the readers of this study through these various stages of the writing process and focus on the dialogue and heuristic techniques that peer tutors can use to help tutees in the writing center, I would like to suggest ways that my revised theory of classical stasis may be used as a part of the tutor’s toolkit, when applicable to a student’s particular situation.

The writing process for all writers should be a process of continual discovery about both themselves and their topics as they articulate their thoughts and make new meaning during the act of writing. Simard argues that the communication and the discovery processes of writing are
equally beneficial to writers, since both come from thinking, and they learn about themselves from committing their ideas to paper or a computer screen (104). To me, this discovery process that occurs in the course of writing makes writing the enjoyable act that it is; if inexperienced writers could experience the thrill that comes through learning from their thoughts while making new connections in the act of writing, they would begin to see writing in a new light, as a valuable activity— one worthy of the time that is required to work through the various stages of their writing processes. In the writing center, peer tutors act as coaches as they encourage students through the many steps of their writing processes, enthusiastically pointing out to students how their writing has grown and developed and helping students to see how much they have learned through the act of writing.

Discovery during the act of writing should not be only a part of the professional writer’s experience but one from which students can also receive gratification. Linda Flower and John Hayes emphasize that the word discovery seems to give us the glamorous "eureka" idea—the "I have found!" that Archimedes cried upon discovering a method for determining the purity of gold— whereas actually writers "don’t find meanings, they make them" (92). "Discovery, the event, and its product, new insights, are only the end result of a complicated intellectual process" (92). Because
the mythology of discovery—looking in the right places, in experience, or in the writer's mind—does not tell the writer "how to create new concepts out of the raw material of experience," inexperienced writers feel defeated before they even begin. Flower and Hayes see this myth of discovery as leading both poor and fluent writers astray, the former by giving up too soon and the latter by being "satisfied with too little" (93).

For answers to their questions, Flower and Hayes look to cognitive psychology and find that many scholars feel the crucial part of the discovery or problem-solving process is "the act of finding or defining the problem to be solved" (92). According to psychology, "people have a 'problem' whenever they are at some point 'A' and wish to be at another point 'B,'" like having to write a paper and wishing it were already finished (93).

Ann Berthoff concurs that most students have difficulty in easily recognizing particular problems they need to solve because they lack a method or means of constructing critical questions (4). This is where peer tutors in the writing center can help students learn to solve their problems of having to write papers that students have no idea of how to write. Peer tutors can help students learn to form critical questions through the use of stasis theory that will bring up the issues or problems to be argued to a solution in the students' papers. For example, a tutor
could ask a student who is writing on the subject of self-defense the second stasis question of definition—what is it?—and could receive an answer about protecting oneself, even to the point of murder. This would lead to the third stasis question—what is the quality of an action?—and could present the issue of whether or not murder is ever justified.

Flower and Hayes argue the importance of students seeing the issues or problems that need to be solved in their papers, because writers will only solve the problems they "give themselves to solve. The act of formulating questions is sometimes called 'problem-finding,' but it is more accurate to say that writers build or represent such a problem to themselves, rather than 'find' it" (93). A rhetorical problem is a complex construction, not a given, created by the writer during the composing act. Thus, writers themselves create the problems that they solve (93).

Donald Murray states that if we are going to teach the theory of writing as a process, then teachers must be able to present ways that students can actually experience this process as they "produce pieces of writing that find their own meaning because they understand what happens during the writing act" (13). And what better atmosphere do we have for inexperienced students to be guided through this writing process on an individual basis, to experience its stages to the fullest, than in writing centers under the tutelage of
interested, caring peer tutors?

As Murray retorts, "I would not write—would not need to write—if I knew what I was going to say before I said it" (13). Murray compares a piece of writing to a lense; by looking through it, the writer sees how to make the writing more effective and learns what the writing wants to say (7). For him, the writing process is a means to discover his thoughts. He argues that teachers, and I would add peer tutors, must resist the urge to give students all the answers, letting them freely learn and discover their own thoughts through a writing experience that successfully sheds new light on their old ideas (13-14). Murray emphasizes the importance for those who assist students to explain to them that "their writing needs room--time and space--to find its own meaning" (14).

Teachers and peer tutors, as they help students work through the writing process, can extract insightful episodes from professional writers' musings. An example I find helpful and have shared with students is one I located in the preface of Farley Mowat's *Never Cry Wolf*, as he tells his readers how he found meaning and discovered the other side of his issue as his intention changed when he became engrossed in the process of writing. This is the discovery process in action. Mowat states:

> When I began writing this book eleven years ago the wolf was cast in a rather minor role. My original plan was to write a satire about quite a different
beast— that peculiar mutation of the human species known as the bureaucrat. I intended the wolf to serve only as a foil for an exposition of homo bureaucratis. . . . But somewhere in the early part of the book I found myself losing interest in bureaucratic buffonery. Without conscious volition, I became increasingly engrossed with my secondary character, the wolf. Eventually the wolf took the book right out of my hands so that it became a plea for understanding and preservation of an extraordinarily highly evolved and attractive animal which was, and is, being harried into extinction by the murderous enmity and proclivities of man. (v)

I like Mowat's observation that, "Without conscious volition, I became increasingly engrossed with my secondary character, the wolf"; to me this statement fully discloses the discovery process that can occur through writing when writers look at both sides of the issue—as with Mowat's two issues: wolves, the bad guys (or gals), versus people, the good guys (or gals); or people, the bad guys (or gals), versus wolves, the good guys (or gals). Through the act of writing and during that process, the exploration of issues, Mowat would change his mind and decide to defend the wolves.

In writing this study, I, like Mowat, would make a discovery. In the beginning, I thought I would explore the invention process and peer tutors' use of heuristics during that process, but in the midst of writing this argument, stasis theory enthralled me. As my focus changed, so did the direction of this paper. I began to make new meaning, at least new for me, writing and discovering.

In The Art of Wondering, William Covino states that the motive for writing should be that the writing makes its own
meaning. He argues that even though our teaching of writing has made a complete turn around from teaching the product theory of writing to teaching the process theory of writing, this is ironic since all essays and tests still rest on the matter of closure and a final product being produced (127). He seeks a composition philosophy that resists closure, encourages revision, and employs "writing as a philosophy. . . . The writing is informed by associational thinking, a repertory of harlequin changes, by the resolution that resolution itself is anathema. The writer writes to see what happens" (130). Covino has a point, but I would argue that even professional writers must eventually bring their work to a temporary closure for publication purposes, though they can still make changes through revised editions.

Writing to see what happens may be a difficult point to convey to students when they come to the writing center with an assigned topic. They may see no opportunity for creativity on their part but feel that they must conform to their teachers' molds. The individual atmosphere of the writing center and the tutor's one-on-one conversation with the student can be an essential factor in sparkling creativity in a student who feels trapped into writing on an assigned topic in the teacher's area of expertise. To Wayne Booth, this individual attention that a tutor can give to students is the ideal way of helping them to connect their ideas to their own experiences in order to become aware of
how conclusions relate to the steps of an argument and as the way to eliminate boring papers (156-57).

Professional teachers and peer tutors in writing centers can encourage the individuality of students and help those who feel blocked in their thinking and/or writing by encouraging an atmosphere of freedom and experimentation. James Adams in *Conceptual Blockbusting* argues that students can become inhibited by emotional blocks: "1. The fear of taking a risk;" "2. No appetite for chaos," which is characterized in the process of writing as the stage that exists before the student produces "an idea or focuses a topic;" "3. Preference for judging, rather than generating ideas;" "4. Inability to incubate;" and "5. Lack of motivation" (53-53).

According to Irene Clark, students can be helped to learn that, because of the recursiveness of the writing process, and I would add because of the recursiveness of the stages questions, the discovery of a topic can occur during any stage of the writing process (33). New ideas may materialize during the revision process just as well as during the invention process. For this reason, students should always be encouraged to be alert for opportunities to rewrite some or all sections of their papers as their thoughts continue to develop.

In order for peer tutors to understand new tutees' writing backgrounds and attitudes toward writing, tutors
should spend most of the first sessions talking with students about their experiences, preconceptions, and writing needs. The individual setting of writing centers offers students a place where they can relate to peer tutors through dialogue, and tutors can assess whether or not the students may have a problem (such as, an area mentioned in James Adams' book) that will need to be addressed in later sessions.

Though the peer tutor-tutee conversation, tutors try to create a friendly and trusting relationship with tutees, one that will encourage students to relax and to participate in the effort to improve their writing and learning, as in this interchange:

Jim (tutor): Did you have a plan or outline for this paper before you wrote it?

Jane (student): No. I just wrote it. I didn't have much time to work on it.

Jim: (Smiles and Nods) A "night before" job, eh? Sometimes that happens to all of us. (Clark 22)

Instead of the tutor condemning the student, he works on their rapport by empathizing with the student's dilemma. As the relationship becomes stronger, Jim can share with Jane the importance of allocating enough time for her writing. Through the peer interaction, students will begin to see that learning is a multi-faceted process, that we learn from each other as we strive to make new meaning through writing.

Once peer tutors have gained students' confidences and
briefly explained the recursiveness of the writing process that will be demonstrated as they work together through the various stages of the writing process, tutors can begin to introduce ways of playing with ideas, strategies, and procedures to generate topics for papers. In the writing center, tutors have the added advantage of talking with students about their topics, which can become the first step in generating ideas even before students write anything on their papers. Clark finds that this talking stage can help students even before they start to write to overcome any anxieties they may feel about writing the assignment (37). Through questioning, students can be asked to "define the writing assignment, explore a possible direction for the paper . . . [and] to think about the purpose and focus . . . [they] might want to develop" (Clark 36). When students are able to focus on answering such questions, their anxiety lessens because their tasks seems more approachable.

William Covino feels that, as writers, we must maintain a certain amount of what he calls "thoughtful uncertainty, the attitude that necessarily informs full exploration and motivates wonder" (130). He argues that this uncertainty is the motivating force that compels us to seek conversation about other ideas and with other people. For him, the act of writing is the way "we consistently locate and relocate ourselves" in the world (130). Covina—like Jaques, in
William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, who said, "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players. . . ." (2.7, 139-40)—feels the world is a drama made up of ideas and people (130).

D. Gordon Rohman states, "As Erich Fromm writes in his essay, 'The Creative Attitude,' to be original does not primarily mean to discover something new, but to experience in such a way that the experience originates in me" (110). The more educated people become, the more they should realize that most of their thoughts are not original but are a part of the human conversation that has been going on since homo sapiens began. Only when people begin to make new connections, at least new for them, do they begin to experience some original thinking.

According to Lochman, all the elements necessary for writing arguments are within people; even dating back into pre-history, the interiorization of oral debate is a crucial behavior in the advancement of human culture since it opens up "possibilities for objectifying, analyzing, refining, developing, and synthesizing disparate ideas within the self. And these means of thinking are crucially related to the act of writing" (22).

Kenneth Bruffee, in his article "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" explains that the work of Lev Yngotsky and other psychologists have shown that when we have reflective thoughts we are internalizing the social
conversation of other people (5). After we have learned externally, we learn internally by replaying those dialogues ourselves, silently in our imagination, playing all the parts of the discoursers in the conversation (5). This inner dialogue can also be called our inner self, inner voice, or a feeling of inspiration.

Sondra Perl says "felt sense" is another term for the feeling of inspiration that professional writers refer to as their inner voice. "Felt sense" was coined by a University of Chicago philosopher, Eugene Gendlin, who defined it as:

the soft underbelly of thought . . . a bodily awareness that . . . encompasses everything . . . [a writer knows and feels] about a given subject at a given time. . . . It is felt in the body, yet it has meanings. It is body and mind before they split apart. (qtd. in Perl 115)

Perl finds that writers, when given a topic, will experience a felt sense—"images, words, ideas, and vague fuzzy feelings that are anchored in the writer's body" (115). When this felt sense is working, this inner voice allows writers to create new and fresh ideas as they write, something they never said before (116).

The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in Thought and Language explains the difference between writing, or written speech, and inner voice, or inner speech. He defines inner speech as abridged, abbreviated, and almost completely predicated, since the thinker always knows the details of the situation, and writing as developed and complete, since
the writer must always explain the situation (100).

Bruffee also gives his definition of the difference between thought and writing:

If thought is internalized public and social talk, then writing is internalized talk made public and social again. If thought is internalized conversation, then writing is internalized conversation re-externalized. . . . Like thought, therefore, writing is temporally and functionally related to conversation. Writing is in fact a technologically displaced form of conversation. When we write, having already internalized the "skill" and "partnership" of conversation, we displace it once more onto the written page. (7)

Since writing and thought, or internalized conversation, are so closely related, peer tutors who dialogue with students about their assignments before the actual writing have an important job to fulfill in helping tutees to organize their thoughts, because the quality of these conversations will be reflected in the students' prose.

Bruffee contends that writing is even more complex than previously thought because it is two steps away from conversation, and, when writing, writers must first be able to talk through with themselves the issues they want to address, and the writers' skills in this inner conversation are directly related to their "ability to converse with other people in an immediate social situation" (7). Bruffee points out that since the ability to write well is directly related to writers' abilities to carry on the "social symbolic exchange we call conversation," writing teachers and tutors must realize that part of their task also must
involve the students' participation in conversation at all stages of the writing process (7). Tutors talking with students to help them clarify and discover their own thoughts is just as important in prewriting as it is in revision. Therefore, this conversation and feedback need to follow beginning writers through the whole writing process.

We do not learn to write in a vacuum. Professional writers know this, and teachers must accept this fact also. Peer groups in classes and peer tutoring in writing centers are two pedagogically acceptable ways for students to share ideas and receive feedback on their writing. All writers, whether experienced or novice, need to be able to share their views and receive constructive criticism from others regarding their thoughts.

Two reasons why peer tutoring can provide an important educational service to a university or college is that peer tutors can provide the social context that is necessary for students to practice and experience discourse valued by knowledgeable communities in academia, government, business, and the professions; and since peer tutoring is a form of collaborative learning, it can provide "the kind of social context in which normal discourse occurs: a community of knowledgeable peers" (Bruffee, "Peer Tutoring" 9). Bruffee argues that neither peer tutors nor students may be equipped to master "the normal discourse of a given knowledgeable community" alone, but only by combining their efforts--the
tutor's knowledge of the formal rules "of academic discourse and of standard written English" and the tutee's knowledge of his/her subject and the teacher's assignment. If the student does not bring this information to the conversation at the tutoring session, "the peer tutor's most important contribution to the session is to begin at the beginning: help the tutee acquire the relevant knowledge of the subject and assignment" (Bruffee, "Peer Tutoring" 10).

The peer tutor and tutee do not collaborate to write, edit, or proofread the student's paper. Instead, they converse about the scholastic subject, the assignment, their own academic relationship, the relationship between teachers and students, and most of all about writing (Bruffee, "Peer Tutoring" 10).

Tutors dialogue with students about many topics, the tutoring sessions, students' own expectations for their writings, and interests they may have in common to establish a camaraderie that will put students at ease and develop a sense of trust. A rapport must be developed in the first tutoring session for the following sessions to be successful because students will tend not to trust a tutor with whom they do not feel comfortable. Depending upon how much time is needed to promote this relationship, the actual work on the writing project may not begin until the second session or even later. I see the first valuable use for stasis theory at this time when the tutor begins to dialogue with
the student about what he/she will write.

In her dissertation, Raign sees Cicero's stasis theory as having more value than just merely a heuristic that students can use "for discovering thesis statements; an adaptation of Cicero's version of stasis theory can serve as a heuristic for teaching critical thinking" (174). Because she believes thinking and writing are inseparable, Raign elects to develop a critical thinking course structured around the theory of stasis. In her class setting, she has students form peer groups and dialogue on the stases questions. She says, "What students are learning to do is explore their topics so that they are prepared mentally to write an objective, well-researched essay" (177).

In the same vein, peer tutors trained in the use of stasis theory can, using the peer process, guide students through the stases questions during the dialogue of the prewriting session(s), thus encouraging tutees to expand their topics, to form and develop concepts, to look at both sides of an issue, and to learn to think critically, as I will soon demonstrate in this study in a hypothetical tutoring scenario between a tutor and me, as the student, to illustrate the effectiveness of stasis theory as a tool for generating and focusing ideas.

But what is this prewriting part of the writing process? According to Sabrina Thorne Johnson, prewriting is a "temporal space" where a variety of stimuli can trigger
numerous responses. It can be considered the whole time period encompassing the writer's first knowledge of the need to write up to finding something meaningful to write (233). Janet Emig basically agrees with Johnson's ideas of stimulus instigating the prewriting, and for her the segment extends from that period of time when writers, with a view toward writing, perceptively select particular features from their "inner and/or outer environment" to the time when the students elucidate their perceptions on paper as they begin to write words or phrases ("12th Graders" 39).

D. Gordon Rohman calls prewriting "the stage of discovery in the writing process when a person assimilates his [or her] 'subject' to himself [or herself]" (106). Linda Woodson says, "In modern rhetoric, invention is the art of the discovery of subject matter of discourse and is often used synonymously with prewriting" (32) Yet in another section of her Handbook, she defines prewriting and distinguishes it from invention:

The activity of the mind before writing, evoking ideas, plans, and designs and imposing patterns upon experience. Prewriting is coaxed by journal-keeping, analogy (recognizing relationships among concrete observations), and meditation. Prewriting contrasts with invention in that the goal of prewriting is self-actualization, whereas traditionally the goal of invention is to find the means of persuasion. (45)

For Woodson, the goal of prewriting is to convince oneself, while the goal of invention is to influence others.

Prewriting is the step when writers think about their
subjects and try to discover their own views on their topics; part of the prewriting stage in a writing center is the dialoguing, when peer tutors first converse with students about their assignments and begin to help them generate ideas that they own intuitively but not consciously. Students discover the issues, the pros and cons of their arguments, through this prewriting tutor-tutee dialogue. Prewriting may be distinguished from invention, the phase when students actually take their prewriting thoughts and begin to work with them to structure their papers.

Glen McClish concurs that "public confrontation of argument should be employed as the central prewriting activity," and that "students benefit from being encouraged to argue directly . . . with one another" (391-92). This spirit of friendly debate, with a "pro and con analysis" of the issues, can occur quite naturally in the tutor-tutee relationship of a writing center when employing the stasis questions during the prewriting stage of the writing process.

While dialoguing with students in the writing center during this prewriting stage, I like to tell students about one aspect of prewriting that works for me, incubation, thinking about a subject before I actually begin to write. Just like an incubator hatches baby chicks, so may their minds begin to hatch ideas and questions that may be useful
in writing their assigned papers if they, as students, will let their minds wander on their topics.

Raign says that many writing students, as they search for knowledge, are able to think critically but are hampered because they cannot "question effectively the world in which they live" (169). She contends that they lack solid information and a way to gather it, which results in "essays that are shallow and often bordering on meaningless, based upon theses of no more depth or relevance than 'euthanasia is murder' or 'welfare should be abolished'" (169). According to Raign, students who write statements like these did not research their topics thoroughly before deciding what stands they would take on the issues (169).

In order to help students learn what kinds of questions to ask themselves, peer tutors in the writing center are trained to ask the proper questions that will elicit information from students that will be helpful when they begin to write their papers. Knowing how to form these questions can be a problem for inexperienced tutors, or even for experienced ones. But the structured format of the stases questions may help tutors, particularly when tutoring on argument papers, to focus the dialogue, pointing students toward relevant topics and pertinent information. As tutors work with the stases questions, they will gain confidence that they can help inexperienced students to gather ideas about what to write on a particular assignment. For
example, the tutor who would work with the student writing
the paper on self-defense would be almost certain that her
use of the second and third stasis questions would help him
to discover at least one issue in his topic.

Meyer and Smith state in *The Practical Tutor*, "When
tutors engage in dialogue with writers they temporarily
stand in for the writer’s 'other self' and help writers
develop the dialogical habit of mind that is necessary to
good writing" (37). They compare this "other self" to the
experienced writer’s inner monitor that speaks to the writer
as he/she writes, commenting, questioning, specifying, and
connecting his/her ideas (27). Peer tutors can serve this
same purpose and accomplish this same end for inexperienced
writers, thus helping them to develop this inner voice that
will be capable of directing their own writing in the
future.

Meyer and Smith encourage tutors to ask open-ended
questions, ones that spur independent thinking that cannot
simply be answered by a yes or a no (34-35). They give an
example of Ann, the tutor, using restrictive questions in a
tutoring session with Ron, the student:

Ann: You said you wanted to talk about water
pollution in your area?

Ron: Yes, I live four blocks from the bay, and
there’s a marina there that messes up
everything.

Ann: Do you mean the boats dump their waste in
the water?
Ron: Yes.
Ann: Do the people also throw their garbage overboard?
Ron: Yes.
Ann: Has the marine life been affected?
Ron: Yes it has. You can’t fish anymore. It’s not safe. (35)

These questions evoke no meaningful ideas for the tutee, whereas the stases questions, being open-ended and recursive, help students pinpoint issues through their own responses. This same dialogue between tutor and student might proceed in the following manner if the tutor uses the stases questions:

Ann: It is--is pollution a fact? (First stasis question of fact.)
Ron: Yeah it is--it’s all over the place in our streams, in our air, on the ground, on our walls.
Ann: Sounds like you’re pretty adamant about pollution, but what is it? (Second stasis question of definition.)
Ron: What is it--it’s man messing everything up, making everything unclean.
Ann: What does that do to our quality of life? (Third stasis question of quality.)
Ron: It makes it miserable. We can’t drink the water; soon we won’t be able to breathe the air.
Ann: What action could we take to correct that? (Fourth stasis question on the action to be taken.)
Ron: We should pass really stiff laws to make businesses and people conform to our stiff
pollution guidelines.

Ann: What are stiff laws? (Second stasis question of definition.)

Ron: Oh, really tough ones. People and businesses couldn't do this, and they couldn't do that.

Ann: What would that do to our quality of life? (Third stasis question of quality.)

Ron: It would make life great—everything would be kept clean. Well, maybe it wouldn't be so great. Products might get really expensive if businesses have to comply to drastic measures. Huh, I guess I'll have to think more about this issue.

When Ann guides Ron back and forth through the stasis questions, Ron begins to see some of the interesting directions he could explore in his paper.

Raign points out that many scholars of classical stasis agree that, in the past, dialogue is a precursor to stasis theory (107). She explains:

Dialectic was used in all the Platonic dialogues because to Plato it is the only form of philosophical reasoning. And in the Platonic dialogues the questions asked are frequently those of the stasis theory. The Platonic dialogues, even more than illustrating the use of stasis questions as a form of critical inquiry, illustrate with dramatic effectiveness, the stasis questions in action. (116)

If Plato, who was a master at dialogue, is a precursor to stasis theory and uses the questions of that theory in his dialogues, then obviously peer tutors, who are also striving to master dialoguing techniques, can become more proficient at dialogue by using the same questions.

Jeanette Fahnestock, Marie Secor, and even Edward P. 64
J. Corbett regard the issue of cause as important in modern writing. Tutors should introduce the idea of cause to update the classical model of stasis theory. I suggest doing this by inserting a stasis of cause as the fourth stasis question and advancing the tranlative or fourth question—what action should be taken?—to the fifth question. These questions may be used as a type of heuristic, and because of the recursiveness of stasis theory the tutor may move up or down the stases questions as needed and may even skip any that may not be applicable to a particular composition. My stasis theory proposal would be as follows:

1. Is it? Does an act, a person, or thing exist?
2. What is it? What is the definition of the act, person, or thing?
3. What kind is it? What is the value, quality, or nature of the act, person, or thing?
4. What caused it? What is the reason why the act, person, or thing exists?
5. What should be done about it? What is the action that should result from this argument?

For example, if my name were Suzie and I came to the writing center to get help with writing on the topic of how to solve the welfare problem in our society, the tutor could begin our dialogue by asking me "Is it?—is welfare a fact today?" To which I would naturally respond, "Yes, many poor people are on welfare." Then she would proceed to the next stasis question of "What is it?—how would you define welfare?" I
would say, "Welfare is the government giving free money to those who can't work." She would answer "Yes, that is true" and then suggest that we would get a more precise definition by looking in the dictionary, which she would hand to me. I would look up the word welfare and read, "of, relating to, or concerned with welfare especially with improvement of disadvantaged social groups" (Webster 1330). She would then tackle the word improve and go back to the first stasis question of fact by asking me, "Does it [welfare] improve disadvantaged social groups?" If I try to answer, "Yes, it does improve them," she would ask me the second stasis question again and ask me to define the word improve. I would look in the dictionary again and find "to enhance in value or quality: make better" (Webster 577). She would then go back to the first stasis question of fact for the third time and ask me, "Does it [welfare] exist? Does it improve or make better or enhance the value or quality of life for the disadvantaged?"

To this question I would have to answer "Yes and no--welfare helps people to exist, but it takes away any will to exist. Though it provides for some of their needs, it does not enhance the value or quality of their lives." From this point, I would begin to see the stasis, since I now would have to consider the two sides to the issue. This would naturally lead us to the third stasis question of quality. And she would continue by asking me, "What is the quality of
life for a person on welfare?"

I would begin to see that although some of the welfare recipients' physical needs might be met through public assistance, their need for self-respect and pride in a job well done would not be fulfilled. Welfare would also cause them to see themselves as stereotyped and cause them to despair that they would never be able to climb out of their economic holes. My paper could go on to discuss the cause and the action that might be taken.

Or my composition might develop along another line if the tutor pursues the answer I give to the definition of welfare: "... as giving free money to those who can't work"; she might open my insight by going back to the first stasis question and by asking me, "Is it a fact that people can’t work?" Then I would have to say, "Yes, in some cases, such as those who are severely disabled, but, no, because many times other people could work if they had the opportunity through gaining the necessary job skills or had their needs met, such as an inexpensive place to care for their children when they are at work."

This line of questioning would also open up a two-sided issue. Then the tutor could move on to the second question again to have me define disabled. Next, she could revert back to the first stasis question and ask me, "Is it a fact that the disabled can't work?"

I would have to say, "Some could if they had the
opportunity and the necessary handicapped facilities." This same procedure could continue, considering those on welfare who are not disabled, which would probably bring out a minimal difference between the disabled on welfare and those on welfare who are not disabled since both can be hampered by lack of opportunity, job skills, family responsibilities, and necessary assistance, such as handicapped and/or child-care facilities. My paper could also possibly discuss causes and then look at some actions that could be taken. The question of action could even begin my composition, becoming the thesis statement in the introduction to answer the assignment's question—How can we solve the welfare problem?—and then I could circle back through the questions with the summary of the paper, ending in the fifth stasis question, restating my resolution to the problem.

Thus stasis theory opens up many possibilities for the direction a composition might take and the issues it might consider and will result in more mature thought and writing as the students are encouraged to see the many possibilities available to them as creative thinkers and writers. In the conversational or prewriting stage of the writing process, after tutors have used the stases questions to help students pinpoint the issues that their papers might take, tutors might encourage students to use the prewriting technique of brainstorming on both sides of the issue.

Linda Flower and John Hayes suggest that brainstorming
is similar to free-writing: writers write without stopping by following wherever their intuition leads; but unlike free-writing, which essentially is free association, writing without any direction, brainstorming is goal-directed, writing with a focus on a particular problem (454). Or brainstorming can be done orally, thus reducing the head-hand dichotomy that blanks many novices. Flower and Hayes suggest that writers can look for a "cue word or rich bit," an important idea that comes out of the brainstorming to which their minds keep returning. Psycholinguists call it "the center of a network of ideas and associations which are unique to the writer" (Flower 455). As a type of "mental shorthand," that one expression unites an entire "body of ideas and experiences which are related to the person's thoughts" (Flower 456). Thus, while the stases questions may bring forth the issues contained in students' topics, brainstorming may also become a catalyst for discovery, bringing forth orally or on paper from the students' intuitions, expressed thoughts and ideas of which they may not be consciously aware.

Though at first glance these stases questions may appear easy to use, peer tutors will need time in their training sessions to practice using them, role playing with each other the parts of tutor and student, to become professional at ascertaining the heart of an issue. Through this type of practice and through experimenting with using
the stases questions in their own writing, tutors will learn to present questions effectively to students. Tutors need to be aware that topics may be asystatic or near-asystatic—unsuitable for two-sided arguments—and not introduce the stases questions on assignments that are inappropriate for the theory.

Tutors need to be cognizant of the limitations of other heuristics as well, that tutors can only apply these methods when they are relevant, and they will need practice in using them to become effective heuristic coaches. Kevin Davis notes that tutors need to remain flexible and "recognize that their systematic tutoring process might, in fact, be at odds with a writer's composing process" (72). This is one reason why tutors need more than one resource in their toolkits. Tutors, like student writers, must not try to rely on only one method. They must be diversified to be truly effective to meet the needs of their divergent students and tasks.

Another phase of the prewriting stage of the writing process is invention. When the tutors work with students in the invention phase of the writing process and present the stases questions as a heuristic for students to use in writing their papers, tutors can remind students how their dialogue in the prior prewriting session(s) followed this same format as they move through the same set of questions. This will reinforce in students' minds the valuable insights
they have gained from circling through the stases questions.

Heuristics can be a valuable tool that peer tutors can use in the invention phase to help inexperienced and even experienced writers to generate ideas, to plan, and to set goals for their writing. Linda Woodson calls them "A method of solving problems; a series of steps or questions which are likely to lead to a solution of a problem" (28). Richard E. Young defines the word heuristic as "specific plans for analyzing and searching which focus attention, guide reason, stimulate memory and encourage intuition" (1). Heuristics are proven to be a beneficial methodology, a workable technique, that peer tutors can use to assist inexperienced writers who are unfamiliar with them. And the stases questions can be applied as one of the workable heuristics peer tutors select to use in the invention phase, when these questions are applicable to a student's composition, whether or not the tutor has used these same questions in the conversational, prewriting stage. Stases questions can be introduced as an independent heuristic for discovering the arguments in a paper.

Peer tutors must select from many types of heuristics the one most suited to the needs of their tutees' particular assignment. For example, a tutor would not use the stases questions to help a tutee write a "how to" paper but would perhaps help the student cluster and group ideas and then order them in an effective sequence to complete the
demonstration of how to do the subject.

James Kinney, using Aristotle's art of classification, divides heuristics epistemologically into the "three traditional ways of knowing: empiricism, rationalism, and intuitionism. These three ways provide us with a set of exhaustive, mutually exclusive classes for all possible heuristic procedures" (352). Of course, the classification of heuristics is being debated, as are many other issues. Kinney argues:

[Lee] Odell restricts heuristics to "systematic inquiry procedures" and labels them "processes of conscious inquiry." ... Richard Young carefully distinguishes between heuristic procedures and rule governed ones; still the essence of Young's definition is that heuristics are systematic, i.e., analytical, linear, rational. But a quick check in the OED reveals that heuristics is a rather recent term (1860) and means simply "serving to find out or discover." The requirement that heuristics be systematic exists only in the minds of those who have developed systematic procedures. (351-52)

Thus some of our theoreticians narrow the meaning of heuristics while the dictionary definition broadens the term, making it applicable to any discovery technique that works for a writer.

Kinney hopes to include all possible discovery method procedures by making his classifications broader. When he refers to empiricism, he means more than scientific inquiry, including knowing directly through the senses and physical experience, dating back to Aristotle and inductive reasoning, "moving from particular sense data to a knowledge
of the form within the object" (352). An example of this type of an empiricist heuristic would be Flower and Hayes' synectics heuristic--systematic exploration of four kinds of analogies--where in one of the analogies, personal analogy, a student relates something from personal experience to something else in order to make the meaning of the other subject clearer (Flower 455).

Kinney gives an example of an empiricist heuristic from Robert Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance of the author sending one of his students, who was blocked on what to write, to observe and focus on only one brick in the opera building in Bozeman, Montana, the city in which the college is located (352). This experience was supposed to bring forth some revelation from her senses that would become a springboard for her writing to begin. When she would focus on this one brick, her mind would release mental images from its file of memories of other bricks in her life--her childhood home, her school--or perhaps visions of other similar rough surfaces--the sidewalk in front of the school where she seriously cut her knee, the hospital where she received stitches--and would free her from writer's block.

Kinney's next category, rationalism, uses deductive reasoning and logic, an ordered process into the discovery process. Examples of rationalism would be the well-known heuristics of classical rhetoric, the topics, and newer ones
like Burke’s Pentad; Pike, Becker, and Young’s Tagmetics; and Richard Larson’s Invention Questions (353). The stases questions would fit into this category because, even though they are recursive and can be flexible, they do follow a set order, a numbered sequence.

The last category, intuitionism, is based on ways of knowing, which go back as far as Plato, and refers to flashes of intuition that reach down into the subconscious and bring out knowledge of which a person is not consciously aware. Some examples of intuitive heuristics would be Peter Elbow’s freewriting, encouraging writers to begin writing something, whatever comes into their heads; brainstorming, challenging writers to list all the ideas they can think of on a particular topic; analogy, forcing writers to make comparisons of one item to another; and Rohman and Welcke’s meditation, advocating writers to free their minds of conscious thoughts and to illuminate intuitional ones (Kinney 354-55).

Sabina Thorne Johnson divides what she calls "prewriting" into only two schools of thought, "intellectual," which is comparable to Kinney’s rationalism, and "intuitive," which is similar to Kinney’s intuitive. Johnson does not deal with Kinney’s category of empiricism. She states that "the ‘intellectual’ approach depends . . . on a formal set of questions which the writer applies to her material" (235), and the stases questions would fall into
this category because they consist of a formal set of questions. She sees these questions as illuminating, "much as she might hold up a prism of light so as to analyze it or break it down into compartments, from the study of which she may form an idea about the whole and its parts" (235). The stasis questions will illuminate the arguments hidden in a given topic so that the writer can analyze the two sides of the issue. For example, in the first hypothetical scenario between the tutor and me as the student, the tutor presents the stasis questions in a skillful manner that illuminates for me the issue of whether or not welfare is beneficial to its recipients. Johnson views the questioning procedure as a heuristic, and she quotes Richard Larson, who argues that heuristics can pinpoint the data's importance that otherwise might "at first seem insignificant, and can suggest ways of restructuring a body of data so as to disclose features of an experience that had not been recognized but are well worth writing about" (235).

As examples of the "intellectual" approach, Johnson gives those of Pike, Burke, and Larson, which she says "require the writer to move from self, out" (235). Johnson compares the "intellectual" approach with the "intuitional" approach, stating the latter moves the writer "from the material, in." "Intuitional" approaches like brainstorming and free-writing, according to Johnson, invoke the generation of ideas "by forcing the writer to
dredge up from his [or her] subconscious the impressions stored there of the material" (235).

For Johnson, "Creativity just happens. . . . No one knows what creativity is or what generates it, only what may hinder it" (237). In her opinion, each opposing side of the debate on creativity thinks that it knows what makes someone creative and how to ignite that spark of creativity, "whereas in truth no heuristic—and no careful avoidance of a heuristic—can determine genuine invention or discovery" (237). Johnson argues that we must help students to realize that "seeking a thesis is not a simple matter" (237). She uses the analogy of prewriting techniques being like "putting many coins in a slot machine—put in enough, and you will eventually hit the jackpot" (237).

According to Sabina Thorne Johnson, students at highly competitive universities must assimilate heuristics that will help them to find the available arguments on their subjects. She contends that unless they learn to develop these techniques in their own writing, they simply will not survive because the composition is too difficult. And that is the reason why most instructors use "some sort of formal structured approach to prewriting, impose a set of questions on the material . . . and teach students to do the same . . ." (239). Johnson avers that teaching students heuristics is the only way to initiate them into the type of "analytical writing other instructors in the university will
Johnson may be prejudiced toward using heuristics, but I do agree with her that, in most cases, students will write more proficiently if they use prewriting techniques, which will give them an advantage over those students who have not learned these skills.

Much emphasis is placed on heuristics by educators and Thomas Nash reports that few writing center tutors actually use a formal heuristic, according to researchers for the Southeastern Writing Center Association. Some of the reasons tutors give for not using heuristics with students in writing centers are that they are having problems with the application of these heuristics themselves, that the heuristics are applicable more to teachers than to students, and that students need help to uncover subconscious and unconscious thoughts (183). For example, W. Ross Winterowd believes that heuristics are so essential for students to learn that he spends a whole chapter, thirty-four pages, carefully explaining different heuristical techniques and giving students exercises to practice using them in a student text, The Contemporary Writer (78-102). And I contend that peer tutors need practice using heuristics in their training sessions. Nash continues by saying that to help students overcome mechanical responses that are hollow and lack originality, writing centers need to help students discover the playful aspects of working with heuristics like Aristotle’s Topoi and Pike, Becker, and Young’s Tagmemics.
Peer tutors could make the stases questions playful also. Nash states:

Although freewriting and brainstorming and other loosely organized methods have virtue for the writing center tutor, we also need to look towards ways of distilling the "playful" elements from the more systematic prewriting approaches. For best use in the laboratory setting, a prewriting plan should combine the frivolous elements of freewriting with the organization of the formal heuristic. (183)

This is similar to what I propose for peer tutors: to use the stases questions as springboards for pinpointing issues with students and then have the tutees brainstorm to develop their ideas on both sides of those issues.

After students in the prewriting stage have gathered some thoughts through dialoguing with tutors and created these thoughts and generated new ones through using heuristics in the invention phase, the next step in the writing process is writing, the actual drafting of the paper. The use of stasis theory may not be as applicable to this stage of the writing process as in the prewriting stage, but if students have used the stasis questions as a basis to generate ideas or as a heuristic for invention, they might want to follow the stasis format in the actual writing of their compositions, as I did in Chapter Three. Once students have been introduced to stasis theory and have a useable grasp of the concept, this option of using the stasis questions is open to them in all phases of the writing process.
Once the paper has been written, the next stage of the writing process comes into play, rewriting. This is a stage when peer tutors in writing centers can again be of invaluable use to students, both inexperienced and experienced, augmenting collaborative learning to its fullest extent. And in this rewriting stage, stasis theory has a possible use. As tutors dialogue with students, giving them feedback on their drafts, tutees may find only a few or many areas of their compositions that need to be rewritten. Sometimes tutees may decide to rewrite their whole papers and to reuse the stases questions to redefine the issues of their arguments.

In the days of the Greek rhetoricians, orators would interact with their audiences and get feedback from responses. In composition, writers often feel isolated from their audiences, and peer tutors can provide what Thom Hawkins calls "a vital link in the writing process, a link between writer and audience which is often missing when students write for teachers" (27). He says tutors explain that the missing link is the opportunity to use oral language in discursive intellectual discourse, and that such discourse helps teach students the skills and judgments necessary to revise. He argues that peer tutors, in particular, are very successful in engaging tutees in this discourse because of the intensely personal characteristics fostered by the social contract between the students and
themselves (27).

Hawkins directs the writing center at the University of California, Berkeley, and contends that the most significant part of tutees' learning to revise is the truly discursive nature of the conversation between students and tutors as they refine their thoughts from draft to draft, as they work through the writing process (20). He reports that his tutors, sharing their feelings with him through their tutoring journals, sense that they built confidence in their tutees, a necessity for the students to make significant revisions in their papers, through "the dialogue that teaches students how to argue, to analyze, [and] to restate" (30).

Nancy Sommers finds in her research that students often are reluctant to revise their work because they lack "strategies for handling the whole essay. They need procedures or heuristics to help them reorder lines of reasoning or ask questions about their purposes and readers" (123). Stasis theory gives students such a heuristic, helping them reorder their lines of reasoning, as it pinpoints the issues, or questioning them about their purposes, as it questions the action to be taken, and affecting their readers, as it defines terms and perceives the varying views of the audience through considering both sides of the issue.

Sommers finds that inexperienced writers seem to see
their compositions linearly, "as a series of parts" (123). These students think that form means that the essay must have the rudimentary elements of introduction, body, and conclusion. On the other hand, she finds that experienced writers look upon revision as a part of the whole process, as constant throughout their writing. These writers see revision as the process that brings "a framework," "a pattern," or a "design for their argument" (125).

According to Sommers, experienced writers also talk about "a feeling of dissonance when the writer recognizes incongruities between intention and execution, and [this feeling] requires these writers to make revisions on all levels" (125). Experienced writers, in order to anticipate these "incongruities between intention and execution," imagine or create a reader in their minds, who reads their work and influences their revision processes by giving them a new view of their products (125). Sommers argues that experienced writers gear their revision strategies toward "the causes and conditions, the product, which will influence their reader . . . They demonstrate a complete understanding of which examples, sentences, or phrases should be included or excluded" (125).

Sommers avers that, even more than being a process of communication, these revision strategies are a part "of the process of discovering meaning altogether." She argues that dissonance is at the center of the revision process because
this feeling of cacophony, that all is not right in the writing, makes writers recognize and want to resolve this sense they feel in their composition (126).

Peer tutors in the writing center can help inexperienced writers, who have not yet learned to experience this feeling of dissonance, to develop their own inner voices that can help them to question, comment, clarify, and specify areas of their work that need to be revised. For students who are seeing peer tutors for the first time with the first drafts of their papers, this may be the stage at which the tutors may wish to introduce these students to stasis theory, especially if the arguments are not well-defined in the students' papers. By giving students peer readers' responses to their writing, tutors can help students to begin to devise their own imagined readers who will question and comment on areas of the writing that are not clear, or need examples, or have other problems. Peer tutors can begin to show inexperienced writers, through dialogue and by responding as a reader, the areas of their compositions that need work, as in the following scenario:

Linda: When I read this second to the last paragraph I don't understand your term in the third sentence dehydrogenate. Could you define it or explain the concept?

Danny: Yeah! I guess I just assumed everyone would know what I meant.

82
As inexperienced writers work with peer tutors in this revising phase of the writing process, they will begin to learn to question themselves about their own compositions, the way critical readers would, internalizing various of these techniques, and develop the skills necessary to revise their own writings, which experienced writers have learned.

Lil Brannon and C. H. Knoblauch contend that the writing center is not a substitute for the writing class, but is an alternative resource that can hone in on the individual needs of writers by offering close, immediate, and extensive support, a place for tutors and students to dialogue about their motives for making authorial choices, even as the writer discovers them, for readers' to represent their "perspective at the moment of composing, thereby concretizing the needs and expectations of audiences for writers who may not fully have considered them" (45).

Writers and readers can converse directly about papers in the last stage of the writing process, rewriting, as the student--the writer--and the peer tutor--the reader--together reread the paper and edit for final corrections. This is more than just students' handing peer tutors their papers to proofread. Editing needs to be a combined effort in which both students and tutors read the papers together and look for final ways to improve the work. For example, if tutors have tutees read their papers audibly, they may, in the process of reading, discover some of their own errors
or weaknesses. If students do not perceive some of their own problems, tutors can ask questions to bring the areas that need correction to their attention.

In this phase, as in all the other stages of the writing process, peer tutors must endeavor not to do the work for students but always to attempt to help students develop their own writing skills. The tutors' aims, as they work with tutees, should be to work themselves out of their jobs. The instruction must remain a "provisional state that has as its object to make the learner or problem-solver self-sufficient" (Bruner 53). Psychologist Jerome S. Bruner further says that all plans of correction revolve around the danger of learners becoming permanently attached to tutors' help thus causing them to remain dependent and unable to take on the corrective function for themselves (53). This problem can be avoided as tutors gradually thrust more responsibility upon students for finding their own mistakes as they develop in their writing skills.

In the rewriting stage, stasis theory seems less pertinent for use by students and peer tutors, and yet even at this final step in the writing process the need to revise can still occur, which may reopen the door to the stases questions. Janet Emig explains that because of the nature of the relationship between writing and learning, our ideas are always open to re-evaluation and review through our writing ("Writing as a Mode" 89).
Lee Odell argues that at any stage of the writing process, even revision, writers may redefine and reconsider their ideas and learn to think through the process of composition, and this conjoint relationship, learning through writing, occurs whenever writers compose, regardless of what they are writing. "No matter what sort of writing we are doing, our ideas—as embodied in a written product—are always available for criticism and revision" (104).

Donald Murray contends that the process of writing's finding its own meaning can occur at any stage of the writing process, even revision, because of its recursiveness (6). And Sondra Perl discusses this discovery process occurring after the composition is written:

Rereading or backward movements become a way of assessing whether or not the words on the page adequately capture the original sense intended. But constructing simultaneously involves discovery. Writers know more fully what they mean only after having written it. In this way the explicit written form serves as a window on the implicit sense with which one began. (18)

Thus, even at the editing stage, writers may discover new meaning and decide to rewrite a part or even all of their compositions. However, this is probably more likely to occur in the case of experienced writers than with inexperienced ones, who are less willing to work with their writing.

In the context of the writing center, the peer tutor and tutee relationship is collaborative as they work through
the various stages of the writing process and apply the use of stasis theory, when applicable, to the various stages of the writing process. Peer tutors need to have expertise in diverse techniques in order to aid students to learn to write well. Therefore, I submit the use of stasis theory in the writing center as one of these workable techniques for peer tutors to learn. Peer tutors should be trained and encouraged to experiment with many dialogical and heuristical methods so that they may be adequately armed to meet the needs of all the diverse, multi-faceted, and unique students in any writing center.
Conclusion

Peer tutors play important roles in the writing centers of our institutions of higher learning, working as peer coaches to encourage and guide students with diverse needs through the various stages of writing processes. They need both dialogical and heuristical skills and techniques to be fully effective in working with students. Stasis theory, with its logical questions to discern issues in arguments, is applicable to many stages of the writing process and especially useful in the peer tutor-tutee conversation and invention strategies.

Stasis theory has many valuable uses: it can help students, through the use of the recursive questions, to generate ideas and gather information; as students begin to see the direction their thoughts are taking, it can help them to formulate theses and organize their papers; in the process of using the theory, students can learn to discern issues and to think critically, which can make for more mature writing; and stasis theory can encourage students to consider their audiences as they explore both sides of controversies.

There is another aspect to the stasis theory issue, the negative angle. Stasis theory, if not applied properly, can have the following drawbacks: it can be unusable unless peer tutors and tutees receive adequate instruction in the theory and practice its employment; it can be unusable if peer
tutors and students try to apply it to asystatic and near-asystatic questions, ones that are not applicable to stasis theory; and it can become a rote and stagnant form if tutors try to use it in areas in which it does not fit or if they overuse it. When peer tutors and students lack adequate training in stasis theory and struggle to use the stases questions in improper ways, they may become discouraged from using the stases questions in germane applications.

All these negative aspects of stasis theory can be circumvented through comprehensive peer tutor training, a necessary aspect of any effective tutoring program, and the advantages of using stasis theory far outweigh the disadvantages. Stasis theory is powerful, recursive, and flexible, a workable theory that can be used in many ways, some of which I have suggested in this thesis. Therefore, I propose that stasis theory should be considered relevant, a worthwhile theory for our modern writing centers, to teach to peer tutors for use in their collaborative learning, peer tutoring role.
FOOTNOTES

1. Since the word *stasis* and its variations, *staseis*, and *status*, are no longer considered foreign terms, having become a part of our language and listed in our dictionaries, I will be consistent throughout this thesis and not underscore the term, except when it is italicized in some of the quoted passages.

2. According to Katula the term *stock issues*, is sometimes attributed to James H. McBurney, James M. O'Neill, and Glen E. Mills (184).
WORKS CITED


--- "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" Writing Centers: Theory and Administration. 3-15.


Coe, Richard M. "If Not to Narrow, Then How to Focus: Two Techniques for Focusing." College Composition and Communication 32 (1981): 272-77.


Harris, Muriel. "Theory and Reality: The Ideal Writing


Warnock, Tilly, and John Warnock. "Liberatory Writing Centers: Restoring Authority to Writers." Writing Centers: Theory and Administration. 16-23.


