

Name

Professor Cherie Walsh

English 101

3 April 2016

As with other student samples, this one, too, is not without flaws. Please remember class discussion about this article when using aspects of it as a model.

Rhetorical Analysis of “The Evidence Supports Artificial Sweeteners Over Sugar”

Since the introduction of artificial sweeteners, many studies have revealed the potential adverse effects of sweetener consumption, instilling uncertainty among people. Aaron E. Carroll, a professor of pediatrics at Indiana University School of Medicine, examines these studies and discusses his research and experience with artificial sweeteners in his article, “The Evidence Supports Artificial Sweeteners Over Sugar,” published in *The New York Times*. Carroll begins with an observation of this phenomenon at a local level, stating that he has “watched a continuing battle” among his friends “about which is worse for you: artificial sweeteners or sugar” (Carroll). The ongoing debate among his friends prompted Carroll to research this issue further rather than rely on myth and popular media sources, for these sources usually lack scientific depth. From the evidence he gathered, Carroll strongly believes that the facts point to no correlation between health problems and artificial sweetener consumption. Carroll seeks to convince his readers that artificial sweetener consumption pose no health problems but sugar consumption does; he uses a variety of appeals in his article, preferring the persuasive appeals of ethos and logos as evident in his writing.

Carroll's professional and educational background contribute to his appeal to ethos. His reputation as the editor in chief for his blog, *The Incidental Economist* and a writer of popular articles published by *The New York Times* speaks for itself. He frequently writes and blogs on health research and policy; so, his name is recognizable among his readers in the *Times* and in his blog. In addition, his position as a professor of pediatrics at a medical college conveys that Carroll has attained a doctorate degree and/or has a high level of education in the fields of health and medicine. The combination of his position as a professor and education level gives his opinions on this subject more value. Furthermore, Carroll's article falls within his expertise, health research. He has written a number of articles, which have been published by the *Times*, on performance drug use, the effects of lead exposure, and the effects of moderate (alcohol) drinking. Thus, the combination of Carroll's notoriety, qualifications, and experience in journalism strengthens his ethos. In addition to his reputable background, Carroll uses a variety of methods in his writing to further his appeal to ethos.

In his writing, Carroll references many strong, credible sources, contributing to his credibility and appeal to ethos. These sources are written by medical researchers or scientists from a variety of reputable colleges, firms, and medical institutions such as the Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Not only does Carroll use information generated by reputable entities, but he also embeds in-text links to those sources as a citation method. This allows the reader to easily access the sources and verify the facts and statistics in his article. Embedding links to the credible sources he uses shows that Carroll has conducted extensive research and is well

informed. This in turn boosts his credibility with his audience and other readers who may be unaware of his reputation.

In addition to the way he presents and uses his credible sources, Carroll incorporates personal anecdotes in the introduction and conclusion of his article to further his ethos appeal. Incorporating personal stories allows Carroll to draw upon his readers' experiences to achieve some common ground and illustrate his own stake. In the introduction before his thesis statement, Carroll describes a conflict that prompted him to research the issue – “In the last few years, I’ve watched a continuing battle among my friends about which is worse for you: artificial sweeteners or sugar” (Carroll). Sharing his experience enables his readers to relate to Carroll’s situation and become interested in what the available evidence suggests. Carroll also makes the issue exigent to the rest of his audience in the following sentence – “Unless you want to forgo all beverages that are sweet, you’re going to run into one of these (artificial sweeteners or sugar)” (Carroll). Carroll successfully establishes an immediate connection to the reader early in his article with his short personal anecdote in the introduction. The early connection allows the reader to see Carroll as a person who is just like him/her. In addition to the personal experience in the introduction, Carroll incorporates one in the conclusion; he effectively uses a different anecdote to present his stake in the issue stating that “My wife and I limit our children’s consumption of soda... When we let them have soda, it’s almost... always sugar-free” (Carroll). This tells the readers that he, a highly educated professor in the field of medicine, has taken action given the information he mentioned prior to the conclusion. Carroll is able to gain his reader’s trust since he illustrates that his actions are consistent with his words. Carroll’s strategic

placement and use of personal stories enable him to establish a personal connection to his audience and gain his reader's trust, adding to his ethos appeal.

In addition to the methods he uses to boost his appeal to ethos, Carroll uses a variety of logical appeals that effectively persuade his readers. One way he accomplishes this is through the organization of his article. It is evident in his article that he incorporates short personal anecdotes only in the introduction and conclusion paragraphs; the research/evidence backing his thesis statement are in the body paragraphs between the introduction and conclusion. As mentioned previously, the use of personal stories is intentional. The short personal story in the introduction not only immediately grabs his reader's attention, but also introduces the topic that the rest of the article discusses. The personal story in the conclusion shows that Carroll has taken action, but it also reiterates his thesis, that "there is a correlation between sugar consumption and health problems" but no correlation with artificial sweetener consumption (Carroll). His personal stake in the conclusion elegantly summarizes Carroll's stand on the issue and brings the reader back full circle to the question posed in the introduction. Because Carroll mentions his stake in the conclusion, the reader is left with the thought of their own dieting habits in relation to those of Carroll's, a professor in medicine and a respected health journalist.

Carroll further appeals to his readers logically by connecting to their reasoning. Carroll devotes his body paragraphs to examine the weaknesses of the methods used in the studies that deem artificial sweeteners to be a health risk. For instance, he begins by analyzing the experiments that concluded saccharin, a type of artificial sweetener, causes bladder cancer. Carroll reasons that there is "no association between saccharin consumption and bladder cancer" because these experiments were conducted on mice, which have slightly different biological

processes than humans (Carroll). To illustrate that the slight differences in biological process matter, Carroll compares saccharin to vitamin C – a known beneficial nutrient– stating that feeding the mice vitamin C will also cause bladder cancer. Furthermore, Carroll notes that the type of mice used in the saccharin experiments “is frequently infected with a bladder parasite” which naturally makes this type of mice more susceptible to bladder cancer (Carroll). Carroll lays down a clear path for his readers to deductively reason that the effects saccharin has on mice cannot be extended to humans. Another artificial sweetener, aspartame, came under close scrutiny for increased risk of cancer due to results on lab rats as well. However, Carroll argues that the increased risk “was in people ages 70 and older” and reiterates his logical argument that the experiments on rats are not representative of humans (Carroll). Again, Carroll presents the information in a fashion that allows his readers to deductively reason that aspartame pose no health risks. After he discredits the evidence against the safety of consuming artificial sweeteners, Carroll continues to criticize the use of added sugars by providing numerous facts and statistics illustrating that sugar intake provides no health benefits, such as increased fat, overall weight, and risk of type 2 diabetes. Carroll plays on the fact that people understand that there is a relationship between sugar consumption and delivery of calories stating that “it should come as no surprise that the intake of added sugars is significantly associated with body weight” (Carroll). However, he still cites credible sources to back this claim. Within the body paragraphs that discuss his research and evidence, Carroll enables his readers to logically conclude that there are many risks linked to sugar consumption but none linked to artificial sweeteners.

Using the persuasive appeals of ethos and logos, Aaron E. Carroll effectively tailors his argument to be persuasive. His professional background and notoriety as a journalist allows him to capture his audience's attention. In addition, his use of personal experiences allows the reader to see his connection with the issue and relate to Carroll at a more personal level. In conjunction with the methods he uses to strengthen his ethos appeal, Carroll appeals to his reader's logic and reasoning by pointing out the limitations of various experiments – claiming that artificial sweetener consumption pose certain health risks – and providing credible scientific evidence to support a widely understood relationship between sugar consumption and weight gain. Carroll is able to successfully persuade his readers that artificial sweetener consumption poses no health problems but sugar consumption does.

Work Cited

Carroll, Aaron E. "The Evidence Supports Artificial Sweeteners Over Sugar." *The New York Times*. The New York Times. 27 July 2015. Web. 27 March 2016.