

Sample of how the coding spreadsheet would look:

ID	Advice Text	Auth	Action	Articulate	Amount	Affirmatives	Negatives	Obvious
1	"Live life to the fullest and try not to die."	7	2	7	2	2	1	6
2	"It is probably a good idea too get the degree in some sort of thing where there are jobs."	3	6	2	1	1	0	4

Authoritative [1-7 scale]

Is the advice written in an authoritative style? Authoritative advice is confident, direct, and unqualified. The advisor sounds certain of the advice and does not "hedge." Authoritative advice says, "This is what you should do (or not do)." It implies that the advisor is an "authority" who knows what he or she is talking about. It offers "declarations" rather than "suggestions."

E.g., "Always look before you leap" rather than "It seems to me that looking is sometimes a good thing to do before leaping."

Actionable [1-7 scale]

Is the advice actionable? Actionable advice is clear and easy to follow. It often provides a series of steps to take, like a recipe. After reading actionable advice, an advisee should know exactly what to do and how to do it. Actionable advice is specific rather than vague, concrete rather than abstract, and does not require interpretation.

"First look both ways. Next, if you don't see any cars, cross the street quickly" rather than "Try to be safe."

Articulate [1-7 scale]

Is the advice articulate? Articulate advice uses appropriate vocabulary to make complete, well-formed sentences, and is generally free of spelling and grammatical errors.

“If you are young, your investment portfolio should contain more stocks than bond, but the balance should change as you age” rather than “Stocks for sure. Not bonds but only if yr young& nNot older.”

Amount of Advice [count]

How much advice was given? This does not simply refer to the number of words or sentences, but rather to the number of distinct suggestions made. To determine this number, rewrite the advice as a bulleted list in which each bullet is a distinct and separate suggestion. The amount of advice is the number of bullets in such a list. When in doubt whether a sentence contains (for example) 1 or 2 distinct pieces of advice, err on the side of the higher number.

“Before getting married it is wise to live together for a while to see if you are compatible. It is also wise to discuss important topics like children and finances. Finally, make sure your family approves” contains 3 pieces of advice, but “Before getting married it is wise to live together for a while to see if you are compatible” contains just 1.

Affirmations and Negations [count]

Consult the list you created when rating “Amount of Advice.” How many bullets in the list are suggestions about what the advisee should do (affirmations) and how many are about what the advisee should not do?

“Make sure to have all the ingredients on the counter before you start mixing the dough, and then mix it for several minutes until it is soft and pliable. Don’t mix too fast” contains 2 affirmations and 1 negation.

Obviousness

Obvious advice is advice that just about anyone would probably know without having been told by the advisor.

“When driving, be safe” is obvious advice because even novice drivers already know this without being told, whereas “When driving, always have a set of jumper cables in the trunk” is not obvious advice because it might not occur to a novice.