Effective Programming Practices for Economists

Software engineering

Testing code that should raise errors

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Reminder of the example

```
>>> raw = pd.read_csv("survey.csv")
>>> raw
```

	Q001	Q002	Q003
0	strongly disagree	agree	python
1	strongly agree	strongly agree	Python
2	-77	disagree	R
3	agree	-77	Python
4	-99	-99	Python

From the metadata you know

- Q001: I am a coding genius
- Q001: I learned a lot
- Q003: What is your favourite language

- -77 not readable
- -99 no reply

What will happen for invalid data?

```
def _clean_agreement_scale(sr):
    sr = sr.replace(
        {
            "-77": pd.NA,
            "-99": pd.NA
        }
    )
    categories = [
      "strongly disagree",
      "disagree",
      "neutral",
      "agree",
      "strongly agree"
    ]
    dtype = pd.CategoricalDtype(
      categories=categories,
      ordered=True
    )
    return sr.astype(dtype)
```

- What if next year the survey tool changed the representation of missings?
- What if categories were changed?

- What do you actually expect the function to do?

Tests pin down desired behaviour

```
import pytest


def test_clean_agreement_scale_invalid_data():
    with pytest.raises(ValueError):
        _clean_agreement_scale(pd.Series([-77, "typo"]))
```

- Passing two codes that should not work
- We expect a `ValueError` to be raised
- Test will fail if
  - no error is being raised
  - a different error is being raised

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Tests teach you programmes' behaviour

- This is how I learned that `.astype(pd.CategoricalDtype())` sets values that are not among the categories to missing!
- Small examples are exactly the right level to learn
- Imagine this would have happened in a large project, where you would have noticed only when only 5% of the expected sample size is left in regression tables!
- "Fail early, fail often"

For the record: Solution

```
def _clean_agreement_scale(sr):
    known_missings = {"-77", "-99"}
    categories = ["strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree", "strongly agree"]
    if invalid_values := set(sr.unique()) - set(categories) - known_missings:
        msg = f"Unexpected values in agreement scale: {invalid_values}"
        raise ValueError(msg)
    dtype = pd.CategoricalDtype(categories=categories, ordered=True)
    return sr.replace({m: pd.NA for m in known_missings}).astype(dtype)
```

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