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Databricks Certified Associate Developer for Apache Spark 3.5 - Python Sample Questions (Q96-Q101):

NEW QUESTION # 96

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An engineer has two DataFrames - df1 (small) and df2 (large). To optimize the join, the engineer uses a broadcast join:

```
from pyspark.sql.functions import broadcast
df_result = df2.join(broadcast(df1), on="id", how="inner")
What is the purpose of using broadcast() in this scenario?
```

- A. It filters the id values before performing the join.
- B. It ensures that the join happens only when the id values are identical.
- C. It increases the partition size for df1 and df2.
- **D. It reduces the number of shuffle operations by replicating the smaller DataFrame to all nodes.**

Answer: D

Explanation:

A broadcast join is a type of join where the smaller DataFrame is replicated (broadcast) to all worker nodes in the cluster. This avoids shuffling the large DataFrame across the network.

Benefits:

Eliminates shuffle for the smaller dataset.

Greatly improves performance when one side of the join is small enough to fit in memory.

Correct usage example:

```
df_result = df2.join(broadcast(df1), "id")
```

This is a map-side join, where each executor joins its local partition of the large dataset with the broadcasted copy of the small one.

Why the other options are incorrect:

A: Broadcasting does not change partition sizes.

B: Joins always match on key equality; this is not specific to broadcast joins.

D: Broadcasting does not filter; it distributes data for faster joins.

Reference:

Databricks Exam Guide (June 2025): Section "Developing Apache Spark DataFrame/DataSet API Applications" - broadcast joins and partitioning strategies.

PySpark SQL Functions - broadcast() method documentation.

NEW QUESTION # 97

Which Spark configuration controls the number of tasks that can run in parallel on the executor?

Options:

- A. spark.driver.cores
- **B. spark.executor.cores**
- C. spark.task.maxFailures
- D. spark.executor.memory

Answer: B

Explanation:

spark.executor.cores determines how many concurrent tasks an executor can run.

For example, if set to 4, each executor can run up to 4 tasks in parallel.

Other settings:

spark.task.maxFailures controls task retry logic.

spark.driver.cores is for the driver, not executors.

spark.executor.memory sets memory limits, not task concurrency.

Reference: Apache Spark Configuration

NEW QUESTION # 98

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A Spark application is experiencing performance issues in client mode due to the driver being resource-constrained.

How should this issue be resolved?

- A. Increase the driver memory on the client machine.
- **B. Switch the deployment mode to cluster mode.**
- C. Add more executor instances to the cluster.
- D. Switch the deployment mode to local mode.

Answer: B

Explanation:

In client mode, the driver runs on the same machine that submitted the job (often a developer's workstation). If the driver has insufficient memory or CPU, it becomes a bottleneck.

Solution: Run the job in cluster mode.

In cluster mode, the driver runs inside the cluster on a worker node, benefiting from distributed cluster resources and improved performance for large workloads.

Why the other options are incorrect:

B: Executors handle tasks, not driver overhead.

C: May help temporarily but doesn't scale; cluster mode is best practice.

D: Local mode runs everything on one JVM - worse for large workloads.

Reference:

Databricks Exam Guide (June 2025): Section "Using Spark Connect to Deploy Applications" - explains client vs. cluster deployment modes.

Spark Deployment Overview - driver behavior and resource management.

NEW QUESTION # 99

A developer wants to refactor some older Spark code to leverage built-in functions introduced in Spark 3.5.0. The existing code performs array manipulations manually. Which of the following code snippets utilizes new built-in functions in Spark 3.5.0 for array operations?

```
import pyspark.sql.functions as F

min_price = 110.50

result_df = prices_df
    .filter(F.col("spot_price") >= F.lit(min_price)) \
    .agg(F.count("*"))
```

- A.

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .withColumn("valid_price", F.when(F.col("spot_price") > F.lit(min_price), 1).otherwise(0))
```

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .withColumn("valid_price", F.when(F.col("spot_price") > F.lit(min_price), 1).otherwise(0))
```

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .agg(F.count("spot_price").alias("spot_price")) \
    .filter(F.col("spot_price") > F.lit("min_price"))
```

- B.

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .agg(F.count("spot_price").alias("spot_price")) \
    .filter(F.col("spot_price") > F.lit("min_price"))
```

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .agg(F.count_if(F.col("spot_price") >= F.lit(min_price)))
```

- C.

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .agg(F.count_if(F.col("spot_price") >= F.lit(min_price)))
```

- D.

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .agg(F.min("spot_price"), F.max("spot_price"))
```

```
result_df = prices_df \
    .agg(F.min("spot_price"), F.max("spot_price"))
```

Answer: C

Explanation:

`count_if(condition)` counts the number of rows that meet the specified boolean condition.

In this example, it directly counts how many times `spot_price >= min_price` evaluates to true, replacing the older verbose combination of `when/otherwise` and filtering or summing.

Official Spark 3.5.0 documentation notes the addition of `count_if` to simplify this kind of logic:

"Added `count_if` aggregate function to count only the rows where a boolean condition holds (SPARK-43773)." Why other options are incorrect or outdated:

A uses a legacy-style method of adding a flag column (`when().otherwise()`), which is verbose compared to `count_if`.

C performs a simple min/max aggregation-useful but unrelated to conditional array operations or the updated functionality.

D incorrectly applies `.filter()` after `.agg()` which will cause an error, and misuses string `"min_price"` rather than the variable.

Therefore, B is the only option leveraging new functionality from Spark 3.5.0 correctly and efficiently.

Explanation:

The correct answer is B because it uses the new function `count_if`, introduced in Spark 3.5.0, which simplifies conditional counting within aggregations.

NEW QUESTION # 100

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A data scientist has been investigating user profile data to build features for their model. After some exploratory data analysis, the data scientist identified that some records in the user profiles contain NULL values in too many fields to be useful.

The schema of the user profile table looks like this:

```
user_id STRING,  
username STRING,  
date_of_birth DATE,  
country STRING,  
created_at TIMESTAMP
```

The data scientist decided that if any record contains a NULL value in any field, they want to remove that record from the output before further processing.

Which block of Spark code can be used to achieve these requirements?

- A. `filtered_users = raw_users.dropna(how="all")`
- B. `filtered_users = raw_users.na.drop("all")`
- C. `filtered_users = raw_users.na.drop("any")`
- D. `filtered_users = raw_users.dropna(how="any")`

Answer: D

Explanation:

In Spark's `DataFrame` API, the `dropna()` (or equivalently, `DataFrameNaFunctions.drop()`) method removes rows containing null values.

Behavior:

`how="any"` → drops rows where any column has a null value.

`how="all"` → drops rows where all columns are null.

Since the data scientist wants to drop records with any null field, the correct parameter is `how="any"`.

Correct syntax:

```
filtered_users = raw_users.dropna(how="any")
```

This will remove all records that have at least one null value in any column.

Why the other options are incorrect:

A: Uses `na.drop("any")` but missing parentheses context (works only as `raw_users.na.drop("any")`), which is equivalent to option C).

B/D: `how="all"` only removes rows where all values are null - too strict for this use case.

Reference:

PySpark `DataFrame` API - `DataFrameNaFunctions.drop()` and `DataFrame.dropna()`.

Databricks Exam Guide (June 2025): Section "Developing Apache Spark `DataFrame`/`DataSet` API Applications" - covers handling missing data and `DataFrame` cleaning operations.

NEW QUESTION # 101

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