

Middleware In A Db Course

Donna M. Schaeffer, PhD

Associate Professor, Marymount University

School of Business, 2807 N. Glebe Road, Arlington, VA 22207

703.284.5718

donna.schaeffer@marymount.edu

Patrick C. Olson, PhD

Associate Professor, National University

School of Engineering and Tech., 3031 Tisch Way, 100 Plaza East, San Jose, CA 95128

408.236.1152

polson@nu.edu

ABSTRACT

For Information Systems faculty the necessity for a database course is generally not a question. However, the technical support for such a course does, at times, bring heated discussions to the faculty. Approaches from using “Access” to requiring “Oracle installed on a cluster” have been encountered. While the faculty has been thoughtful and careful about this issue, students, parents and administrators have been operating in an environment where most entry level jobs require little or no database background. Given this environment it is vitally important to maintain the database course as a well regarded course.

Several important factors are involved for the establishment of a well regarded course or curriculum. These factors include credibility¹ – to students the society outside higher education (alumni, parents, employers). Another factor is relevance and/or utility, which is also judged by students, alumni, parents and employers. Lastly is the course or curriculum contemporary? These requirements apply to most courses; however database has some special difficulties with this, especially if the budget must be kept small. A successful means of approaching this has been the addition of middleware in the database course.

The approach was used at in an MSIS program at a regional level graduate institution. The technologies used included PHP for middleware. The outcome is a course that brings the subject alive and immediately provides promotions to students. The paper will discuss a means of defining what is well regarded for a course, followed by experiences with teaching database using middleware. The final section of the paper will discuss the outcomes of those experiences. Given the modest cost other institutions in higher education may benefit from this approach.

Bibliography

1. Schaeffer, Donna M. and Patrick C. Olson, “Is “Dewey’s Experience” Synonymous with the Current Usage of the Term?” American Society for Engineering Education Pacific Southwest (ASEE/PSW) 2009 Conference Proceedings, March 2009.