VANCOUVER Chapter Study Group

BABOK
Chapter 8 – Underlying Competencies
March 30, 2016

D’Arcy Nolan, CBAP®
Introduction

• Admin
• PD Hours
• Presentation and quizzes at IIBA Vancouver Chapter website

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• D’Arcy Nolan
Agenda

Chapter 8 Review

• Pop Quiz

• Break

• Chapter 9 Review

• Pop Quiz

• Q & A
• **Underlying Competencies Knowledge Area:**

  • Behaviors, Characteristics, Knowledge and Personal Qualities

  • Not unique to the Business Analysis profession.

  • Fundamental skills
Chapter 8 – Underlying Competencies

Figure 1–1: Relationships Between Knowledge Areas

- Business Analysis Planning and Monitoring
- Enterprise Analysis
- Solution Assessment and Validation
- Requirements Management and Communication
- Elicitation
- Requirements Analysis

Underlying Competencies
Chapter 8 – Underlying Competencies

- 8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving
- 8.2 Behavioral Characteristics
- 8.3 Business Knowledge
- 8.4 Communication Skills
- 8.5 Interaction Skills
- 8.6 Software Applications
How prepared are you?

POP QUIZ!
Quick Quiz

What is the difference between a system and software?

A system includes software, hardware, processes and people.
Chapter 8 – Underlying Competencies

8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

- Creative Thinking
- Decision Making
- Learning
- Problem Solving
- Systems Thinking
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

Creative Thinking

- Involves generating new ideas and concepts

- Finding new associations between or new applications of existing ideas and concepts

- Identifying and proposing alternatives

- Asking questions and challenging assumptions.
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

Creative Thinking

Measures of successful creative thinking include:

✓ The successful generation and productive consideration of new ideas.

✓ Application of new ideas to resolve existing problems.

✓ Willingness of stakeholders to accept new approaches.
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

- Decision Making
  - Gathering information relevant to a decision
  - Breaking down information relevant to a decision
  - Making comparisons and trade-offs between similar and dissimilar options, and
  - Identifying the option that is most desirable.
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

Decision Making

- Be aware of the traps that can impede successful decision-making:
  - Tendency to accept the initial framing of a problem,
  - The *sunk cost fallacy*, and
  - The tendency to place greater weight on evidence that confirms existing impressions.
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

Decision Making

Measures of successful decision making include:

- Confidence of the participants in the decision-analysis process that a decision is correct.
- New information or alternatives that cause a decision to be revisited are genuinely new and not simply overlooked.
- Decisions are effective in addressing the underlying problem.
- The impact of uncertainty and new information when making decisions can be effectively assessed.
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

Learning

- Gaining knowledge or skills.
- A domain passes through initial acquisition and learning of raw facts, through comprehension, to applying the knowledge, and finally analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- Synthesizing the information to identify opportunities to create new solutions and evaluate those solutions to ensure that they are effective.
Learning

Measures of successful learning include:

- Agreement by stakeholders that analysis models effectively and completely describe the domain.
- Identification of related problems or issues from multiple areas in the domain.
- Rapid absorption of new information or new domains.
Problem Solving

- Ensuring that the *nature of the problem* is clearly understood by *all* parties and that *underlying* issues are visible.

- *Conflicts* between the goals and objectives of the stakeholders need to be *articulated* and *addressed*.

- *Underlying* assumptions must be *identified* and *tested*.

- *Objectives* need to be clearly *specified* and *alternative solutions* should be *developed*.
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

Problem Solving

Measures of successful problem solving include:

- Confidence of the participants in the problem-solving process
- *Selected solutions* meet the defined objectives and solve the underlying problem.
- The problem-solving process avoids making decisions based on pre-conceived notions, organizational politics, or other traps that may cause a sub-optimal solution to be selected.
System Thinking

- System as a whole has properties, behaviors and characteristics that emerge from the interaction of the components of the system, and which are not predictable from an understanding of the components alone.

- The term “system” is much broader than an IT system:
  - It includes the people involved, the interactions between them, the external forces affecting their behavior, and all other relevant elements and factors.
8.1 Analytical Thinking & Problem Solving

System Thinking

Measures of effective use of System Thinking include:

✓ Understanding of how a change to a component affects the system as a whole.

✓ Identification of reinforcing and compensating feedback loops.

✓ Understanding of how systems adapt to external pressures and changes.
8.2 Behavioral Characteristics

- Ethics
- Personal Organization
- Trustworthiness
8.2 Behavioral Characteristics

Ethics

- Understanding of *moral and immoral* behavior

- *Impact* that a proposed solution will have on all stakeholder groups and work to ensure that those groups are treated *fairly*

- Be able to identify when an *ethical dilemma* occurs and understand how such dilemmas may be resolved
8.2 Behavioral Characteristics

Ethics

Measures of successful ethical behavior include:

- Decisions are made with due consideration to the interests of all stakeholders.
- Reasons for a decision are clearly articulated and understood.
- Prompt and full disclosure of potential conflicts of interest.
- Honesty regarding one’s abilities, the performance of one’s work, and accepting responsibility for failures or errors.
8.2 Behavioral Characteristics

Personal Organization

- Involves the ability to readily find files or information, timeliness, management of outstanding tasks, and appropriate handling of priorities.
- Effective time management requires effective prioritization, elimination of procrastination, and clarity of goals and expectations.
- Information should be stored or filed in a way that enables the business analyst to retrieve it at a later date.
8.2 Behavioral Characteristics

- Personal Organization

Measures of personal organization include:

- The ability of the Business Analyst to find information.
- Regular on-time completion of tasks.
- Efficiency in the completion of work.
- The ability to easily identify all outstanding work and the status of each work item.
8.2 Behavioral Characteristics

- **Trustworthiness**
  - Deserve the *stakeholder’s* confidence
  - Concerned with that stakeholder’s *best interests*
  - Engage with the stakeholder’s *needs*, not the stakeholder’s *desires*
  - *Honestly* address issues when they occur.
8.2 Behavioral Characteristics

Trustworthiness

Measures of trustworthiness include:

- Stakeholders involving the business analyst in decision-making.
- Stakeholder acceptance of the business analyst’s recommendations.
- Willingness of stakeholders to discuss difficult or controversial topics with the business analyst.
- Willingness of stakeholders to support or defend the business analyst when problems occur.
8.3 Business Knowledge

- Business Principles and Practices
- Industry Knowledge
- Organization Knowledge
- Solution Knowledge
8.3 Business Knowledge

- Business Principles and Practices
  - Characteristics that are common to all organizations with a similar purpose and structure, whether or not they are in the same industry.
  
8.3 Business Knowledge

- Business Principles and Practices

Measures of knowledge of business principles and practices include:

- Understanding of business environments, operations, process and practices relating to:
  - Typical organization structures, job functions and work activities.
  - Complex business functions and operations.

- Understanding of relevant regulatory, compliance, and governance frameworks.

- Understanding of auditing and security issues.
8.3 Business Knowledge

- Industry Knowledge

  - Understanding of the *competitive forces* that shape an industry

  - An understanding of *major trends* impacting the industry

  - Recommend changes to an ongoing change initiative in order to respond to a competitor’s action.
Industry Knowledge

Measures of effective industry knowledge include:

✓ Understanding of industry *related material* and keeping abreast of what is taking place in the industry.

✓ The ability to *identify key trends* shaping the industry.

✓ Knowledge of *major competitors and partners* for the organization.

✓ Knowledge of *major customer segments*.

✓ Knowledge of *common products and product types*.

✓ Knowledge of *sources of information* about the industry, including relevant trade organizations or journals.
8.3 Business Knowledge

Organizational Knowledge

- An understanding of the *business architecture*
  - Business models, organizational structure, relationships that exist between business units, and the persons who occupy key stakeholder positions.

- Understanding of the *informal lines* of communication and authority, and

- *Internal politics* that govern or influence decision-making
8.3 Business Knowledge

Organizational Knowledge

Measures of a BA’s organizational knowledge include:

✓ Understanding of terminology or jargon used in the organization.

✓ Understanding of the products or services offered by the organization.

✓ Ability to identify subject matter experts in the organization.

✓ Organizational relationships and politics.
8.3 Business Knowledge

Solution Knowledge

- Use their understanding of existing solutions in order to identify the most effective means of implementing a change.

- Familiarity with the range of commercially available solutions or suppliers that can assist with the identification of possible alternatives
8.3 Business Knowledge

Solution Knowledge

Measures of useful solution knowledge include:

- Reduced time/cost to implement a required change.
- Shortened time on requirements analysis and/or solution design.
- Understanding when a larger change is justified based on business benefit.
- Understanding how additional capabilities present, but not currently used, in a solution can be deployed to provide business value.
8.4 Communication Skills

- Oral Communications
- Teaching
- Written Communications
8.4 Communication Skills

- Oral Communication
  - Verbally express ideas, information, or other matters.
  - The efficient transfer of information, including emotional and other non-verbal cues.
  - The ability to make oneself understood and the active listening skills that ensure that the statements of others are accurately understood.
  - An understanding of tone and how it can positively or negatively influence the listener.
Effective oral communication skills can be demonstrated through:

- Effectively paraphrasing statements to ensure understanding.
- Effectively facilitating sessions, ensuring success through preparedness and coordination.
- Developing and delivering powerful presentations by positioning content and objectives appropriately (i.e. positive vs. negative tone).
- Can communicate the criticality or urgency of a situation in a calm, rational manner with proposed solutions.
8.4 Communication Skills

Teaching

✓ Visual learners
  ✓ presentation of *visual guides* and *models*.

✓ Auditory learners
  ✓ *oral* communication and *written* language.

✓ Kinesthetic learners
  ✓ learn most effectively through *doing*. 
8.4 Communication Skills

Teaching

Effective teaching skills can be demonstrated through:

- Verifying that learners have acquired information that has been imparted to them.
- Ability of learners to use new skills or demonstrate new knowledge.
Written Communication

To write effectively for various contexts and audiences,

- have a broad vocabulary, strong grasp of grammar and style, and an understanding of which idioms and terms will be readily understood by the audience
8.4 Communication Skills

**Written Communication**

Effective written communication skills can be demonstrated through:

- Ability to adjust the style of writing for the needs of the audience.
- Proper use of grammar and style.
- Appropriate choice of words.
- Ability of the reader to paraphrase and describe the content of the written communication.
8.5 Interaction Skills

- Facilitation and Negotiation
- Leadership and Influencing
- Teamwork
Facilitation and Negotiation

✓ *Moderating* discussions among a group to enable all participants to effectively articulate their views on a topic under discussion,

✓ To further ensure that participants in the discussion are able to recognize and appreciate the *differing viewpoints* that are articulated
8.5 Interaction Skills

Facilitation and Negotiation

Effective facilitation and negotiation skills are demonstrated through:

- Ensuring that participants in a discussion correctly understand one another’s positions.
- Use of meeting management skills and tools
- Preventing discussions from being sidetracked.
- Identifying common areas of agreement.
- Effective use of different negotiation styles.
Facilitation and Negotiation

Effective facilitation and negotiation skills are demonstrated through: (Cont’d.)

- Ability to identify important issues.
- Understanding and consideration of all parties’ interests, motivations and objectives.
- Encouraging stakeholders to reach win/win outcomes on a regular basis.
- Understanding of political implications in conflicts and negotiates in a politically sensitive manner.
8.5 Interaction Skills

Leadership and Influencing

- Motivating people to act in ways that enable them to work together to achieve shared goals and objectives.
- Appreciation of needs and capabilities of each team member and how those can be effectively channeled in order to reach the shared objectives.
- To develop a vision of a desired future state that people can be motivated to work towards and the interpersonal skills necessary to encourage them to do so.
Leadership and Influencing

Effective leadership and influencing skills are demonstrated through:

- Reduced resistance to necessary changes.
- Team members and stakeholders demonstrating a willingness to set aside personal objectives when necessary.
- Articulation of a clear and inspiring vision of a desired future state.
Teamwork

- Awareness of team development models that attempt to explain how teams form and function

- Communications and trust can also be enhanced through understanding and awareness of facets

- Process of setting rules for the team, team decision-making, formal and informal team leadership and management roles.
8.5 Interaction Skills

Teamwork

- Team conflict: If handled well, the resolution of conflict can actually benefit the team.
- The basic types of conflict are emotional and cognitive. Emotional conflict stems from personal interactions, while cognitive conflicts are based upon disagreements on matters of substantive value or impact on the project or organization.
- Resolution of cognitive conflict requires the team to focus on examining the premises, assumptions, observations and expectations of the team members.
8.5 Interaction Skills

Teamwork

Effective teamwork skills are demonstrated through:

- Fostering a collaborative working environment.
- Effective resolution of conflict.
- Developing trust among team members.
- Team members have a shared sense of ownership of the team goals.
Chapter 8 – Underlying Competencies

8.6 Software Applications

- General Purpose Applications
- Specialized Applications
8.6 Software Applications

General Purpose Applications

- To document and track requirements.
- Office productivity applications – Word Processing, Spreadsheets, Presentation Software, Collaboration and Knowledge Management
General Purpose Applications

Measures of skill with general-purpose applications include:

- Ability to apply an understanding of one tool to other similar tools.
- Able to identify major tools in the marketplace and describe how they are used in any given situation.
- Understands and is able to use most of the major features of the tool.
- Able to use the tools to complete requirements-related activities more rapidly than is possible without them.
- Able to track changes to the requirements made through the tools.
8.6 Software Applications

- Specialized Applications
  - To support the development of formal models, and in some cases, their validation and implementation as well.
  - Modeling tools, diagramming tools, requirements management software
Specialized Applications

Measures of skill with specialized applications include:

- Ability to apply an understanding of one tool to other similar tools.
- Able to identify major tools in the marketplace and describe how they are used in any given situation.
- Understands and is able to use most of the major features of the tool.
- Able to use the tools to complete requirements-related activities more rapidly than is possible without them.
- Able to track changes to the requirements made through the tools.
How prepared are you?

POP QUIZ!
Quick Quiz

What would be the most important behavioral characteristics for a business analyst?

a. Trustworthiness
b. Ethics
c. Attitude
d. Personal Organization
Quick Quiz

Underlying competencies include all of the following except

a. Decision Making
b. Logical Thinking  
   (Corrected from Logical Thinking)
c. Problem Solving
   (Corrected from Problem Solving)
d. Creative Thinking
Quick Quiz

You have been assigned to work with another BA located in another BC branch office. You have worked with him before and found that he did not follow through with commitments. He did not demonstrate which following underlying competencies?

a. Respect
b. **Trustworthiness**
c. Sense of Confidence
d. Sense of Urgency
Quick Quiz

The following include underlying competencies described in the BABOK

a. Communication skills, negotiation skills, variance analysis skills
b. Trustworthiness, communication skills, lessons learned analysis
c. Software application, communication skills, system analysis thinking
d. Trustworthiness, communication skills, business knowledge
Quick Quiz

Your BA mentor seems to resolve conflict effortlessly. She is demonstrating which underlying competency?

a. Teamwork  
b. Negotiation  
c. Oral Communication  
d. Trustworthiness
Quick Quiz

Underlying competencies include all of the following except

a. Ethics
b. Respect
c. Personal Organization
d. Trustworthiness
Recommended Readings I/II

From Barbara A. Carkenrod, BA Training Industry Founder and Author of Seven Steps to Mastering Business Analysis

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Chapter 8 – Underlying Competencies

Q & A