**Section 103 Usability Testing – Participant 3, Jordan Lindeke**

**Warm-up Questions - 10 minutes**

Before we look at the website, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

1. Are you currently using or have you ever used your GI Bill education benefits?
   1. Currently using at George Washington
2. What has been your experience with VA payments to your school?
   1. Everything has been pretty timely. The only time it wasn’t when the budget was delayed and everyone was having trouble. Everything has been timely except for the time when everyone was having problems
3. Were you attending classes and receiving education benefits in the fall of 2018?
   1. Yes

* If yes, do you recall if you had any issues with VA late payments to your school?
* If yes, can you tell me a little about what happened?
  + Payments were delayed to GW. Luckily they kind of understood the whole situation with the VA nationally. They didn’t make me pay any late fees or anything. It was a little nerve-wracking because I wasn’t sure if I was going to have to pay for it. Luckily our military service office was a great advocate for us. They sent out emails – even now, every week – they keep us updated pretty frequently. At that time I didn’t have housing payments because I was still active duty. So I was getting active duty housing payments and I had saved up enough just in case the bottom fell out and I had saved up just because all of that doesn’t go smoothly.

1. Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
   1. I think so…is that who will pay what? Yes – I used that when I first looked up schools. (How did you hear about CT?) I’m one of those people who will just Google everything. GW is really expensive.
2. Have you ever done Usability Testing before?

**First Task: Find Section 103 - 15 minutes**

* You have a friend who had to take a loan back in 2018 due to late VA payments for schooling. You know that the VA has taken steps to keep this from reoccurring, but that schools may have requirements for you to meet. You’re interested in attending Midland University located in Fremont, Nebraska, how would you use the Comparison Tool to find out what information Midland University requires?
* Typed midland university and clicked Search Schools. Clicked View details. Scrolling down estimate your benefits. I searched for Midland University and luckily there’s only one. I’m looking to see…for them to figure out how to pay. Some of these tuition assistance programs, if they need more info they can look there. For the protection against late VA payments, they need a certificate of eligibility. If they need more information on the policy, they can go here (clicked veteran policy). There’s information about scholarships. I’m looking specifically for information of the loan they took out? I’m sorry….clicked modal for protection. So yeah, this link I just hit “Protection against late VA payments” it looks like they have to have certain forms filled out ahead of time letting them know VA is going to pay for their tuition/education. I mean there is information here and then if you need more information or have a different situation you can contact them or go to the Transition Act. To me, it feels like there is enough information here. Even on the site, it’s like here are the certifying official and who to contact, which to me is important because finding the POC isn’t always easy.

To contact: They have the veteran (policy) link, I would contact…let me see…scrolling around…I would go directly to the school’s website. This doesn’t seem to have what I’m looking for, but that might be because this is the Admissions page.

* You’re interested in attending College of Charleston located in Charleston SC, how would you use the Comparison Tool to find out what information College of Charleston requires?

Typed in “College of Charleston” and clicked Enter. Clicked View details…scrolling down to the bottom. So it looks like…it says there that they have no information specific to that school. Opened modal. It says to me that either CoC hasn’t updated tool or whatever that feeds into this. They may charge you…this website tells me that CoC hasn’t filled in that info. I wouldn’t be too sure honestly. Less comfortable than Midland. It’s one of those things where you’re like it’ll never happened, but I’ve been through it. A lot of their institution summary is not as robust as Midland. When you look at CoC, single point of contact – no. As a veteran…for me, a single point of contact means a military office. And not having protection. A lot of veteran students live on fixed incomes. If I’m thinking of uprooting my family, to me I look for the small things updated. If you aren’t paying attention to the small things, then you aren’t paying attention to the big things. If I’m only going to be living on a student salary, I’d be concerned. If I have to pay $3000 in late fees, that’s substantial.

**Second Task: Section 103 Content - 10 minutes**

* What does “Protection against late VA payments” mean to you?
  + Protection against VA mean? To me, it would be like my tuition payments to the school or whatever payments the VA would be liable to pay…whatever they are on the hook for. It would be those payments directly – maybe not the ones I see, but ones I’ll benefit from
* Have you heard of a Certificate of Eligibility before? If so, when? Have you submitted one before?
  + Yeah, GW I have to do a COE every term that I am going to use benefits. For GW, I have to do it online and they send us email reminding us “Don’t forget to”. We have, it’s called GW Banner, it’s like our Registrar system. Basically its all my personal information and there’s a veterans tab and then there’s a couple questions on there. What are you applying for? Has anything changed? And it goes directly to the university office. Usually whenever I email them, they get back to me in a day or two. Now I’m just in the habit of it, whenever I sign up for classes I submit my COE. It’s all in the same system, so it’s really easy for me. When I first started, I had to get my stuff approved through the VA. Saying I was going to go to GW. Once that’s on file…and they ask have you changed your major? Etc. And there’s notes I can communicate with the military service office. They’re pretty phenomenal. I consider myself lucky. I mean I have a traumatic brain injury and coming back to school later in life.
* Do any other questions come to mind about this?

**Third Task: Additional Criteria - 5 minutes**

* You are also interested in attending Chadron University and are curious about their requirements for obtaining protection against late VA payments. Please determine the requirements for this university.

Typed Chadron state college and clicked Enter. View details. Scrolled down to bottom. Well in Nebraska apparently they are all over it. It says they require COE and additional criteria. I would assume I would need to contact their office to see what those additional items would be. It could be something that you do every semester anyways. If I was a new student, I’d want to make sure I did those. Maybe something saying that I registered for that semester on time…I’m not really sure. Maybe it’s just a special form that the school has, maybe if its Yellow Ribbon? Maybe just depending on the type of benefit you’re using? Probably something specific to the institution.

* What do you think “additional criteria” is?
* How would you go about finding out more information?

**Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes**

* Do you have general thoughts or feedback on the Comparison Tool that you’d like to share?
* We had you look for information on delayed VA payments within the GI Bill Comparison Tool. If this situation arose in real life where do you think you’d look for information on how to deal with this issue?
* Any questions for me?

Additional Questions:

General feedback on CT:

I found it very useful. I live in the DC area. Especially in a place where there are so many schools – for me I found it incredibly helpful. Because to look at so many different schools. Every school has a different website. To find the decision tools I needed and to see how much would be paid and what I was eligible for, I didn’t have to track down info on 5 different university pages that are nothing alike. I had ideas like Yellow Ribbon that I knew I wanted and to be able to compare schools was very helpful.

For additional issues, I would look for GW emails. They were good about posting that information and I was trying not to look at any crazy news blogs. VA and GW mostly. I tried to stay with reputable sources – I wanted it straight from the horse’s mouth. I would go to the VA’s site to see what was happening, who they were working with, any news releases. It’s like do I need to gather up $16000 and sell a kidney? This is my first time using the GI bill just to find any info that was applicable to my situation. I figured everyone and their mother would be calling the school. $16,000 was like oh lord. GW was really fantastic. They call it the dog tags newsletter. They do like during COVID 19 and they keep us connected and they’re good about making a good military community.

Process?

I like that it’s at the bottom because if it was in the middle people might zoom over it. I wouldn’t put it too many other places because you have that wealth of information all together. I like that it’s at the bottom of the list.

What stands out/is most important in Institution Summary?

I’m not worried if anyone is accredited or independent study. Not a STEM person. I’m doing tourism. I do like the single point of contact, credit for military training and protection. And the policy is good.