**School Ratings Discussion Guide**

**P4 – Lisa Hurt**

*When the participant is ready, begin the session with the following intro*

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Amy and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we would be looking at the Comparison Tool and talking about ratings and what information is helpful for Veterans when determining if a particular school is a good fit for them.  
Before we start, a few things I want to mention:

* **This entire session should take about 45 minutes.** I want to be sure not to keep you much longer, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* **In this session, we want to hear your honest opinions.** We just want to improve these tools to better meet Veteran's needs. I will not be offended by any opinions you express, and I welcome your feedback.
* **If for any reason and at any time you want to stop the session, please let me know.**
* **Are you comfortable if I record my screen and audio as we talk today?** We use the recordings to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately. The recordings are destroyed after we complete analysis, and none of your comments will be attributed to you directly.
  + If yes: **Once I start recording, I am going to confirm that you are ok with me recording this session once more.**

*Start recording.*

* \*\*I have started recording. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen and the audio as we talk today?"

**Warm-up Questions (Optional) - 5 minutes**

Let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? I think I have, but that was a long time ago
  + If yes, what did you use it for?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? Currently using – Post 9/11. At AMU…started a long, long time ago. I’m going on my second Bachelor’s
  + If yes, which benefit are you using?
    - When did you start school? Where did you go?
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future?
    - Which benefit?
    - Where are you in the school selection process?
* When you were trying to pick a school, what were you looking for in a school? The main thing I was looking for convenience. I wanted online and I needed something that had the degree plan I wanted.
  + How would you determine if it was a good fit for you?
* If you knew a fellow Veteran who'd attended a school you were interested in, what would you most want to know from them? The length of the classes, how many papers you have to write, format – how many – do you have to do a week and stuff. What’s their set up

**First Task: Initial Look at Ratings - 5 minutes**

Let's say you received a scholarship for **Insert school** and are curious if the Comparison Tool has any information on that school. How would you go about finding **Insert school** on the Comparison Tool?

Clicked box and search…the process was easy, it’s just my mouse and the cooperation

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Tuition, housing, For books, it gives the amount. Scrolling through filters…when I click on view details (prompted to stop) Your money. How many GI bill students an dhow many veterans have rated it – which is very important information. Yeah, how many GI bill students. [Comparing ratings and number of GI Bill students]

The money part is good, but what other information do they have on here?

So on the view details, it pulls up more specific information. It talks about how much GI Bill pays for school, out of pocket, housing allowance and book stipend. And then it breaks it down by…

Things to watch for:

* Does the user notice the ratings on the school cards?
* Does the user interact with any of the filters?

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?
* What do you think of school card?
* What do you think that rating shows you?

Research questions:

* What do users think of the star ratings?
* Who do users think are providing the ratings?

**Second Task - Detailed Ratings - 15 minutes**

You've heard great things about the Veteran experience at **Insert school**, but are curious about the quality of education you would receive there. How would you use this Comparison Tool to see if **Insert school** would meet your needs?

Qualification?

Down where it gets to learning format and location – that’s what I would click on. I would expect the set up for how their classes are broken down – is it AB courses. Where is the location where the actual learning is taking place. That’s what I would expect there? And on that, how often are those classes happening and I’d look under school costs and calendar.

That would be the gist of it in deciding what I want to go. [stopped at eyb] And because I’m guessing this is an in-person college, if they offered online classes.

[Prompted to go down]

Principles of excellence I don’t know what that is. Priority enrollment I wouldn’t know exactly what that would be. I know Yellow Ribbon. And you have school location and different cites where schools are at.

There’s no student complaints in the past year…and wow, that’s top notch. And the ratings…

Ratings are from a veteran standpoint. Veteran community – that goes to how many veterans they have at their school. 4.5 out of 5 stars is actually amazing (for online instruction). The GI bill support because it means they have a designated office or people who are specifically trained. If that rating was a 2? That you don’t have anyone who is trained in GI Bill. Getting GI bill is not the easiest and when I went to school, I had a lot of questions on what chapter I was supposed to use. If you don’t have someone who’s trained, then you aren’t going to be able to help me.

I have a job so job preparation isn’t important to me. I’m just going to school to broaden my horizons. I’m not looking for a degree to get a job.

Wanted to know more about categories? Would press the plus.

Overall experience is not 5 stars, so I’d want to know why it wasn’t 5 stars. They have 5 stars for almost everything.

Okay so when you click on it, it breaks it down by who gave what rating. I’m not sure if I click on the star rating, if it’ll give me the comment….but it doesn’t seem to be an option.

Trustworthy – I actually would put quite a bit of weight into these ratings if I could read them. The stars aren’t enough. These are Veterans so these are people who have served in the military and I hope they have enough integrity to not lie on this. If you’re complaining if your --- didn’t show up online, I can handle that. But I want to know what is wrong.

But with this, you have 8% that says NA…that skews the whole 5 star rating, because you had a few people not even answer. So you think the NAs are influencing the score? Yes

Relationship – I think they average it out

Collected – my guess would have to do with surveys at the end of most classes…how you felt that class went.

Privacy – I know with schools, your name is tied to it. I would hope with this, your name is not attached to the survey. I hope you would be able to just rate with stars, no name.

Things to watch for:

* How does the user select the school (School name or View Details)?
* Where does the user initially look for information?
* Does the user go to the ratings accordion without a prompt?

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?
* What do you think of the school now that you've seen the ratings?

Research questions:

* Are users interested in the different rating categories or just the overall score?
* Which categories are valuable to users? Are there any categories that aren't valuable? Are there any additional categories they would like to see?
* What do users think the different categories mean?
* How do users think the rating scores are determined (average of submitted scores, calculated value, etc.)?
* How trustworthy are the ratings?
* How do users think ratings are collected?
* What level of privacy do users expect if they would provide a rating?
* Do users think the ratings are useful?

**Third Task - Comparing Various Rating Aspects - 10 minutes**

Let's say you want to attend the **University of California** and are trying to decide on the campus where you'll take classes. You plan on living on-campus and all the schools offer the classes you want to take. Walk me through how you'd use the Comparison Tool to help you decide which campus you'd attend.

I’m going to scroll down and I’m going to enter my school and search. Then when I get here it has the different campuses..at this point, I would start clicking on the view details for which campus…oh wait, first I would look at the cities and see if I’m willing to travel. Based on what I see right now..I would look at the Law college because housing allowance to see if I would have the money to get an apartment. The University of David looks best because it’s 4.8 out of 5 and out of 473 GI IBll students. Here the GI Bill student is less than Berkeley…because it isn’t rated, then it tells me that it just started serving Veterans. That many Veterans and nobody rated the school? (warning)

Thoughts on lakewood – No, because it has this big ole caution thing. So I would not pick that one.

Hastings – You know why I wouldn’t do this school? It says Women Only. Prompted to view ratings…that’s when I would click my pluses to read more. Not yet rated? For me, that wouldn’t work because what I would be looking for is online instruction. Only 5 people rated it so either no one has taken online or they don’t offer it.

# of ratings? To be substantive – the number of students enrolled. I would like to see at least a quarter of them filling it out. At least 25%...I think you can get ¼ of people to fill out a rating

New school for Veterans – would you expect to see the first rating or would you expect there to be a minimum number of ratings like 5 to be collected before its displayed? Would expect to see the first one.

Who controls the ratings? The school

How valuable without narrative? Not as valuable – disgruntled student. Would help if had verbiage. Give survey – just click 5 all the way down to get through it.

Caution flag – makes me think ratings aren’t legit. That you’re paying for your ratings. They offer a bonus if you put in a rating.

Things to watch for:

* Does the user look at the overall rating or delve into the detailed ratings?
* Does the user pause or read the caution flag?

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?
* What made you decide to pick that particular campus?

Research questions:

* Would ratings affect the school selection process?
* How does the number of ratings weigh into a user's perception of a particular school?
* Do users think the ratings are useful?

**Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes**

* Do you have general thoughts or feedback on the Comparison Tool that you’d like to share?
* Any questions for me?
* I want to give a chance for the other people on the line to ask a question.

**Thank-You and Closing - 3 minutes**

Well we really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us today. Your feedback is so helpful to us as we continue to work on the site and make sure it really works for Veterans.

Thanks! Lastly, do you know any other Veterans, caregivers, or service members who might be willing to participate in a future user research session? If Yes: Thank you! I'll have our team send you an email with a little blurb that you can pass along.

Great, thanks so much and enjoy the rest of your day!