**Conversation Guide for GIBCT Profile Page Testing**

**P6 - Lauren**

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Jen and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to talk about discovering information about schools on the GI Bill Comparison Tool.

Have you done usability testing before?

If No – I’m going to put a couple scenarios in front of you and ask you to do some tasks on a website we’re working on. As you’re going through the tasks, we ask if you can “think aloud” – tell us what you’re seeing, what you’re looking for and any other thoughts that come to mind as you’re interacting with the site.

Before we start, a few things I want to mention:

* **This entire session should take about 45 minutes.** I do want to be respectful of your time, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* **In this session, we want to hear your honest opinions.** We are not testing your ability. 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 just to make sure that we captured your opinions accurately. After that, the recordings are destroyed - usually within a week or two.
  + 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 - 5 minutes**

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

* What is your military status (e.g. Veteran, child, spouse)? I am a Veteran and also military caregiver
  + If Veteran, which branch of service? Army
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits? I’m in the process of using them. I paid into the Montgomery, but will probably go to Post 9/11. Researching programs right now. Going back for PhD. Trying to figure things out what pre-requistites I need.
  + If yes, which benefit are you using? When did you start school?
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future? - Which benefit? Where are you in the school selection process?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? I believe I did when I first started with helping husband get together. I think comparison between more sense for Montgomery or Post 9/11…what each of those that cover for universities for BAH
  + If yes, what did you use it for?

**Initial Take - 2 minutes**

I’m going to start sharing my screen.

This is the GI Bill Comparison Tool, which allows you to see what education benefits you can receive at various institutions. Do you have any initial thoughts or questions before we get started?

I mean its pretty easy and clean to look at. It looks very different from what I saw. I remember benefits being on the first page. From this, it’s a little…it makes me wonder if all of that has been pared down or if the starting point is supposed to be different. And does this do an autofill? Ok great. Typed University of Maryland – is there a filter in place saying I’m a Veteran saying I’m using GI Bill….I would expect there is some guidance to be as far as that’s concerned…either in those dropdowns. Where it is in filters or update tuition. Opened filter your results. Or maybe if there’s a 3rd dropdown on the side that follows that…just to go over military status, GI Bill benefit, whether you did your full service. I know other bills have other prerequisities. That way when you go to look at the schools. Titled? Something like…filtering…like filter results by…I guess it could go under filter your results. If you had an option to select if you’re looking at VR&E or Montgomery and then what your military status is and then what your duty service is…if you’re 100% then you’re more likely to get approved for Voc Rehab.

**First Task: Notre Dame - 15 minutes**

You've been interested in going back to school to study **Statistics**. A friend of yours recommended **University of Notre Dame** in **Notre Dame, Indiana** to you. How would you use the Comparison Tool to determine if **University of Notre Dame** would be a good fit for you?

Typed university of notre dame…first thing would be searching the school…all of these are the same…I don’t know enough about the university. Are they different? Something hyphenated would be helpful…It looks like they all come up? Trying to figure out if it’s a good fit, I know a lot of people care about housing benefits. I’ve had friends go to certain places because housing benefit was better. Having housing information is nice. Maybe communicating if it’s a Yellow ribbon school…so that if there’s any overflow, you’re able to look for those funds too. See that (YR)? Maybe have its own block…but somewhere within that info [card]. Maybe also seeing if there’s different programs that the GI Bill program instead of the 36 months…like STEM. I only know about that because my husband is getting into STEM classes. I assumed it was a flat 36 months.

I can’t think of anything else at this point. If I’m not comparing it to another university, I’d just click on it.

So yeah, the section here where it says populate your benefits…being able to do that prior to being able to be interested in a school.

These two things are key – additional benefits and school calendar and location…especially if they aren’t in the area. Well I guess I need to start looking in x, y z location. This is also good. I like the cautionary information section – having feedback from other Veteran students is key. Even if it’s a good university, it might not be good for Veterans. And I see that Notre dame doesn’t have any complaints on any of their campuses, so maybe it isn’t working, but I do like having that on there. I like having the Veteran programs and support. That’s pretty useful. And the fact that the Yellow Ribbon stuff is on here. I’ve looked at universities on here and sometimes funds are only for certain career tracks. You learn that they only do it for ag science or something else and it could encourage you to change your major or look at other universities. I mean, I think a lot of the important information is on here. I always want to see if a university is accredited and that…I guess it would be figuring out if Yellow ribbon scholarships are limited and if its limited to colleges, how to access that. And if there are any Veteran scholarships available. The veteran center put my husband in for all kinds of additional scholarships…if that was available, that would be nice. I guess that would go in the Veterans programs and support.

**Things to watch for:**

* What type(s) of search does the user conduct?
* Does the user notice the jumplinks?
* Does the user click the jumplinks?
* Does the user notice the Compare functionality?
* Does the user notice the religious affiliation in the heading?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went? Pretty well…all the important stuff is on here.
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of finding more information about University of Notre Dame? 1
* What types of information would be important to you in looking for a school?

**Second Task: Covering Expenses - 10 minutes**

You've noticed that the GI Bill won't fully cover the tuition at **University of Notre Dame**. You've heard that some schools offer the Yellow Ribbon program, which offers additional financial assistance to GI Bill beneficiaries. How would you use the Comparison Tool to see if **University of Notre Dame** offers the Yellow Ribbon program?

I mean….if there’s a way to see the breakdown, whatever program you’re going through and look at the cost of the program, what the gap is in coverage. Maybe a chart with that information would be helpful, that way you can access things from a financial standpoint. Where? Probably…I mean it could either be its own dropdown or I guess somewhere in Veteran programs and support.

I would probably make my own spreadsheet and compare it. Typically I think I’ve gone on the school website. Trying to figure out between housing cost and figure out if there’s a ballpark. All the additional funds that the university provides.

Gap? What does it say in estimated benefits…and it’s a total of 55k to go..that’s a huge chunk of out of pocket…clicked Scholarships and VA funding..and see if I am eligible for grants…like my husband got a kicker bonus when he signed up. That’s a decent chunk of change for a lot of people. Clicked Learn more for Yellow Ribbon program. You can’t really say that you’re a Yellow Ribbon recipient until you’ve applied for a program and gotten it unless you just check it. Like you know if you have a kicker bonus. For a lot of scholarships and such, you won’t know until you’re enrolled in the school and most are specific to the university. You would have had to commit to know a lot of this stuff.

I don’t know if I would have that scholarships section without an asterisk. The other sections all of that makes sense to play around with when you’re still comparing schools. That section is probably confusing

Follow-up: Do you think you would be eligible for the program? If so, how much of the remaining expenses do you think would be covered?

**Things to watch for:**

* Where does the user look to find the Yellow Ribbon program?
* Does the user see the Yellow Ribbon program listed under EYB?
* Does the user find the Yellow Ribbon calculation in EYB?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went? I mean…it’s pretty clear that they offer it, but it would be nice to know if that was limited to certain programs
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of discovering what financial assistance is offered by University of Notre Dame? 3 – because it does say that its Yellow ribbon access, but it doesn’t break down everything and its in two different sections. Academics ane EYB . Combining those sections might be helpful .
* If you finished researching University of Notre Dame and thought the school was the right fit for you, what would be your next step?

**Third Task: Compare Religious Schools - 10 minutes**

* You're interested in taking a few classes on religion and you're curious what schools in the **Notre Dame** area might have a religious affiliation. You know that **University of Notre Dame** is a Roman Catholic institution. How would you use the Comparison Tool to find schools in **Notre Dame, IN** that have a religious affiliation and see how they compare against **University of Notre Dame**?

I see the notation at the top (Roman Catholic). Clicked Compare for Notre Dame. Opened Compare Drawer…went back to search results. And clicked Religious affiliation. Did not click update results. Changed State to Indiana and Country to USA….so there’s none to compare to. I’d just change the location and the religious affiliation.

Compare – l’d go back to results…looks like I have to compare a few things out. I would just pick them and compare. Is 3 the limit for the tool? Three sounds like you have it narrowed down already. You might actually have 4 or 5 on your list. Comparing in person or online for a single university. Three is not a terrible number, but being able to compare 1 or 2 more. (Clicked compare for name search notre dame)

I like highlight differences. I think this is an easier way to do an overall assessment…I don’t know what 8 Keys to Veteran Success are…and I’m sure I’m not the only Vet who doesn’t know what that is. Maybe I would say moving the Yellow Ribbon stuff out of Veteran programs and up to the benefits section. That would be helpful too…right now its with Student Veteran Group…and that would make more sense if it was in a financial section.

Update tuition and estimate tab? I mean I would assume it’s a difference if its taking classes in person or online. I would assume there’s something under that tab for that. Also depending on which program…master’s, phd, certification. That’s going to change the numbers. Once you change the career path, that would change the book estimate or cost of materials.

Opened it…yeah, this is definitely going to change the layout…I would think these other things. I would have another dropdown for what type of program you are looking for. Maybe putting some filter in for that.

**Things to watch for:**

* Where on the tool does the user go to find religious schools?
* Does the user see/say anything about the religious affilation in the header?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went? Pretty easy. Most of this is very self-explanatory. Most of the financial info is in the same spot. Being able to highlight the differences…there’s a lot highlighted, but if you had narrowed it down that
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of comparing schools with religious affiliations? 1

**Thank-You and Closing - X 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, well thank you so much again, and enjoy the rest of your day!