**GIBCT Colmery Act Veteran Discussion Script**

*April 11, 2019*

**Welcome and Opening Remarks (5 minutes)**

*[When the participant is ready, the moderator will begin the session with the following introduction.]*

Thanks for joining us today! My name is [name], and I also have two colleagues on the line, Amy and Cindy. They are observing and taking notes. We work with a team at the VA that is enhancing a website called VA.gov and we're interested in speaking with you today about the Education section of the website.

We’d like your thoughts on what aspects of the pages work well and where we might make improvements to make things even easier for Veterans.

Before we start, I’d like to mention a few logistical details:

* We are interested in hearing your honest opinions. We are in no way testing your knowledge or ability. Our goal is to be sure that application meets Veterans’ needs, so we are interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas. You are welcome to express any opinions you wish. We welcome your feedback.
* If for any reason you want to pause or stop the session at any time, just let me know. I'd be happy to do so.
* By testing the site thoroughly, we hope to ensure that it’s written in a thoughtful way and gives Veterans all of the information they need to make informed decisions.
* Do you have any questions so far?
* Lastly, we generally record sessions, in case we need to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately.

Are you comfortable if I record the audio as we talk today?

Great! I'm going to turn on screen and audio recording now. Once it's on, I'll ask again, as we like to have your verbal consent

[The meeting host will begin audio and screen recording.]

Are you comfortable if we record the audio and screen movements today?

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

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

Used gi bill before? Yes.

I’m interested in using it. [interested in Post 9/11].

Used va website before? I think I used the thing where you log in with your…ebenefits, that’s what I used.

We understand you may be interested in using VA Education benefits.

1. What factors are most important to you as you look as schools?
2. Do you happen to know which Education benefits are you eligible for?
3. Would you expect the VA website to offer any resources to help you decide which school to attend? If so, what type of resources would you find helpful?
4. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience?

No, I don’t think so,

1. What would you hope to learn by using a GI Bill Comparison Tool?

Maybe compare the different, like 9/11 vs the others, voc rehab, yellow ribbon and all that kind of stuff.

1. What factors would you like to compare about schools or institutions?

That they have the programs that I’m interested in, and cost, too.

Okay, now we're going to look at the va.gov website and walk through a few scenarios.

**Think Aloud**

While you are going through the site, we ask that you please think aloud and vocalize your thoughts and decisions. The more you say about what you are thinking and wondering, the more we’ll learn. We are interested in your first reaction to each page, as well as what you are thinking as you engage with each page. If you have questions about what information needs to go in a particular field, it’s likely that many other Veterans will too. This may seem strange at first, but it helps us understand what you are thinking and helps us so much with our work.

**Scenario #1 (10 minutes)**

Do you have a dream school? Using the GI Bill Comparison Tool, how would you find out what benefits you would receive at that school?

Yale. I guess I would click on one of these schools, but it brought up a bunch of other things. It’s a little overwhelming. I guess that’s on me, though. I just want regular…[she clicked on yale school of management]

I’m trying to figure out how to use my gi bill at this school? Can I change that? [tuition and fees per year] [she modified the amount] I don’t know where that number comes from. Can’t change my degree level. [she changed the yellow ribbon $ amount] Now…ok, I’m seeing…school calendar, this would require me to do some research into what the school offers, whether they’re semesters or quarters. I don’t know…[kicker bonus; clicked on learn more]. Now I have to go to another page. [she clicked on external link] It tells me everything that’s available at the campus and whatever is not, Student complaints, I’m curious. [the source link took her to a va site] All right, that’s all the interesting information, I guess.

Idea of benefits? Oh, I see. [she sees $0 as she’d changed the figures earlier] OK, that makes sense. It shows you what the estimate that they will pay is. So total paid to you, I don’t get all of that? I just get the housing allowance and the book stipend. The rest they’re paying to the school. I wonder if a first time user would understand the difference. [adjust language to indicate what is paid to whom] The thing about how the school calendar operates on quarters, the person would have to know that already. I don’t know if you can make it link to the school.

Thought it was important to adjust figures? I thought it was fine because it adjusts in real time.

Please talk aloud and let us know what you are thinking as you explore the site.

*[After the particpant has explored the site and shared thoughts aloud.]*

1. What are your first impressions? It’s pretty straightforward, I guess. Yeah, it’s straightforward, easy enough to navigate. Maybe some people might get overwhelmed by all the, how they have city, school, employer name [in search field]. Maybe have different fields. Oh, I guess because you do the training schools, so employer name would be a selection.
2. What information on these pages is the most important to you? The stuff where they’re narrowing down your status. For me, I am using veteran benefits, but next go-round, I will be using as a spouse, so it’s good that we’re starting there. That’s neat how they have the month and the percentages that you get [gi bill dropdown] I guess this is a good way to narrow down the information that we see.
3. What is confusing or unclear? Why?
4. How trustworthy and reliable do you consider this information to be?

**Scenario #2 (10 minutes)**

Let say you signed up for the GI Bill last April so you could take a couple of classes at your local community college. After taking the classes, you decided that you'd like to get a degree in engineering. The two schools you are considering are University of Florida and Florida State. You'd like to maximize your benefits. Using the site, how would you decide which school offers you the greatest benefits?

I’d type in both of them. I wonder, well, I guess we’ll see. This says learn about education programs and compare benefits by school. I wonder if it will let me compare schools side by side. I didn’t see this on the first time where you can start to narrow down the institutions that you see [left tabs on search results]. [school profile UofF] I’m wondering how do we know it’s been imported [tuition and fees]. I’m wondering when they’ve been imported. If you don’t import, will it stay zero? I don’t see where I can directly compare. [searched for FSU now] [went back to search results to search for the second school] [FSU school profile] I think it’d be helpful to know the percentage, to know how much the gi bill will pay. I’m comparing those two numbers, but maybe something to give me the percentage, like, the gi bill will pay 40% here but maybe 39% at the other school.

*[After the particpant has explored the prototype and shared thoughts aloud.]*

**Section 510 Follow up questions**

1. What are your thoughts on the contents of the gray box on the right? It’s still the same as the other screen where some people, if you don’t know how gi bill works, they’ll think, oh I’m going to get 12,799. They need to know they’re not getting the money. If I have to comment on it, that’s the only thing.

Useful? Just the breakdown. It does tell you that the gi bill pays this month vs what the tuition and fees are. Oh, I’m blind, out of pocket tuition, none, so they can go by that! I didn’t look at that on the other one, but if they were side by side, I would know.

1. What are your thoughts on receiving an estimate vs. an exact amount for your housing allowance?
2. What are your thoughts on the questions on the left? How they might be useful?
3. If logging in would give you a more precise estimate, would you take the time to do so, or is the estimate sufficient?

I used to see ebenefits, but you know what, I don’t think it told me. I would log in for something specific like that.

1. What are your thought on the 2nd to last question on the left ("Did you use your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit before January 1, 2018?")?

**Section 107 Follow up questions**

1. If you chose a large state school with campuses in multiple cities, would you expect the housing allowance to be the same or different for each campus?

They’d be different, the housing allowance. If I looked it up, I would, if I could type in the other schools, and check that campus.

1. How would you decide which campus you'd like to attend?
2. What are your thought on the last question on the left ("Will the majority of your classes be on the main campus?")?
3. Let's look at the results page for a moment. As you think about large schools like the university of California, would you expect to see a card for each University or one for each branch of a university?

**Scenario #3 (2 minutes)**

[If the participant is eligible for multiple GI Bills] How would you use the Comparison tool to determine which GI Bill to apply for?

I would change this part here [gi bill dropdown] I’d go from there. So far, it seems easy enough, but I don’t know that it would show me a side by side. That would be helpful. It would be a one-stop shop.

**Follow up questions**

1. What are your thoughts on the process of comparing GI Bill?
2. What was easy and did you find challenging?
3. What would make the process of comparing GI Bills easier?

**Post-Task Interview (5 minutes)**

Now that you’ve had a chance to explore the site, I’m going to ask you a few final questions. Some of these questions I’ve already asked you, but I want to ask them again, now that you’ve seen the website.

* What do you like most about this website?

I like how it told you what the gi bill would pay vs the out of pocket tuition because the out of pocket tuition is probably what most people would be interested in, like how much would I have to pay after my benefit?

* What enhancements or features would you recommend to improve the overall usefulness of this site? The side by side comparison for schools and the benefits that the gi bill would pay for each school. A side by side comparison. It’s in the name, gi bill comparison tool.
* Would you use this website in real life? Why or why not? I would if I was trying to decide which benefit I was trying to use. If I was trying to figure out which school I was going to and I knew I was post 9/11, it would be helpful to compare different schools.
* Would you recommend this tool to your friends? Why or why not? Yeah, why not. It’s like a one-stop. This allows you to be able to do it in one spot, one place.
* On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, how would you rate the tool's ability to give you the information you need to make a decision on which school to attend based on the benefits you'll receive? A 4 because it would be easier...well, I’m going to say 4 but that’s because given the name, gi comparison tool, I should be able to easily side by side compare vs. look up, hey estimate your gi bill benefits.
* On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, how likely are you to use a tool like this? Me personally, I’m in the home stretch, so I won’t be changing schools, but I would have used it because I was going to a different school before and once upon a time I was going to a different school, it would have been helpful.
* Assuming you had access to all three, would you prefer to view a site like the comparison tool using a desktop, tablet or mobile? The way it is now, it’s probably the updating in real time that makes it so you can’t look at it on the mobile phone. If this could be looked at on a mobile phone without the adjustments, that would be fine.
* Do you have any additional thoughts or comments you'd like to share? No.

Is this something that’s already available to use? Ok, I didn’t know anything about it.

If they can import the tuition and whatnot, they should be able to import the school calendar. I would want to know, how many semesters can I take because I only have so much time to use the benefit.

**Thank-You and Closing**

*[The moderator concludes each session by thanking the participant for their time and for offering his/her opinions and suggestions.]*

Thank you very much for taking the time to give us your feedback today. We really appreciate your help!