**GIBCT Colmery Act Sec 116 Veteran Discussion Script**

*June 3, 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 the VA.gov website and we're interested in speaking with you today about a pilot program called VET TEC.

VET TEC is a tuition assistance program designed to help Veterans advance in IT careers by enrolling in high-tech training programs.

We’d like your thoughts on what aspects of the website 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. You are welcome to express any opinions you wish. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas and 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.

1. What interest, if any, do you have in pursuing a career in the high-tech industry?

I actually have a tremendous interest. I’m very interested in the collab space.

1. If you were interested in attending a high-tech training program, how would you decide what course to attend?

Typically, I’d look at the certificate that’s required in terms of the domain. That’s usually my first step, industry-leading certificate or degree.

1. What factors would be most important to you when selecting a course?

Convenience. Being that I have a va benefit, convenience. First thing is if it has instructor-led programs, If not, location that’s available. If not, the availability of online. Lastly, the makeup of the student body. That’d be nice. Diversity of experiences of all walks of lives, different viewpoints, different perspectives.

1. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience?

I’ve looked through it but I’ve personally never used it to assess a program that I’ve been interested in.

Okay, let's go ahead 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. Sharing your thoughts aloud may seem strange at first, but it helps us understand what you are thinking and give us valuable information.

**Review the VET TEC Overview Page (5 minutes)**

<https://vagov-content-pr-433.herokuapp.com/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits/vettec-high-tech-program/>

Is this the landing page I’m looking at?

I think it’s pretty straightforward as far as the website. It’s not overly complicated. It’s straightforward, which I like. It conveys what it needs to convey. It’s well-designed. The only information I’m not seeing, and I understand this is probably the GI Bill benefit that I need to use. If I’m not mistaken, you will have to utilize your GI Bill for this benefit? I think that point right there, I would call that out. That was a confusion. I’d have to look really deep… Someone like myself, I’m trying to look at maximizing my benefit. Then of course, a length of time. If it’s using my GI Bill, that’s 3 months I have to figure that out.

To give you a little more background on the VET TEC program, we'd like to share an overview page with you. Feel free to take as much time as you like reading the page and let us know when you are ready to continue.

Do you have any questions about what you’ve read?

**Prototype**

Let switch over to the Comparison Tool.

Just so you know, this is a prototype, rather than a real website. We create mock-ups like these and share them with Veterans in sessions like this to be sure we have everything right before we code the actual website. You'll notice that only certain links have been activated and you’ll not need to enter any data. When you click a field, text will appear automatically.

**Scenario #1 (10 minutes)**

Let’s assume you'd like to advance your IT career by taking advantage of the new VET TEC program. You are interested in finding a local training course to attend. Using the GI Bill Comparison Tool, how would you find a training course and determine how much housing allowance you’d receive while attending the course?

Please talk aloud and let us know what you are thinking.

Okay, so that’s my scenario. These [fields] right here does a great job of answering the basic question. This right here is a nice callout, for someone to prefer online vs. in person. Some schools call it instructor-led, instructor-led school. You have to specifically attend the class. This is good, the city, so that’s good. It kind of gives you an idea. I don’t know why you’d say employer name. I don’t know if I’m interested in that. I don’t know why you would want employer name. Now if this is more than just a credit school, I would be more explicit. When we think of school, say vocation school, or basic short term boot camp school, that type of thing. Length of time, maybe. That’s something that, right off the bat, I would love to get. Especially technology. You don’t need to go to 2-year, 4-year institutions, that type of thing. Other than that, pretty functional. I don’t know if this has something like, Google algorithm where it would complete my sentences for me.

[T told him to click the dropdown] So I’m familiar with these terms. I’m familiar with poist 9/11, etc. For someone that’s new to this type of thing, maybe have a hover, a basic definition of the program name. All these are different programs with different ramifications of benefits. I don’t know if someone would truly understand the gamut of benefits available. But that’s good. It has all your options.

[on school profile page after clicking search schools]

So Detroit, tuition, housing…ok let’s see what you got. 2 week program, location…ok. So, this is a part of me not understanding the program. When I see this, I understand there’s no out of pocket tuition for me. When I see the words, GI Bill, I think, are you pulling my benefits, 36, 48 months. SO some questions arrive. For transparency purposes, if it doesn’t cost me anything…Why would I need to know, if I take professional 2 vs professional 6, you’re telling me there’s different costs, but then you’re telling me I don’t have to pay a thing. The housing allowance is not a flat rate, right? That might need a little bit of information that needs to be called out. [T tells him it’s a flat rate for everyone] Again, I would call it out. IF that number is what they’re getting, then that’s what they’re getting, but if it changes. My only hesitation is these costs., $0. If I know the program inside out, that might be different. Let’s see, you got contact information, application process. [in application process] let’s say I’m interested in this program, are you saying I have to call the school? I don’t know how the program works, but I would try to standardize that. I would just probably use an interface and collect the information right off the bat depending on how the school uses it. I shouldn’t have to deal with the school itself until I’ve been accepted. If you truly want to have a seamless experience with the user. I would try to integrate an application interface or a link ot the school. If there’s a button that says, apply now, boom! Once you’re here and you see something, you just want to go. You can do it via link. You can do it for the school itself by just collecting the basic information. You already have the information you want to collect.

T: Would you expect to apply for both the vet tec program and the school?

That’s the thing…I think part of the failure of the vocational rehab program is, we just don’t know. We have to go through hoops just to get qualified…Most people don’t know. I don’t even have to use my GI Bill, honestly. That’s just through years of navigating the system. I think that would be the first step. Make it truly beneficial. From a hierarchy standpoint, I have a GI Bill benefit. If I want to go technology, I want to go to a 4-year college or I want to go to a master’s program. Whatever it is. That’s the conditional route. But there’s other alternatives, there’s alternative school sources, so that’s what I would try to bring out.

*[After the participant has selected a program and shared thoughts aloud.]*

1. What are your first impressions of the process of searching for VET TEC providers and programs
2. What led you to select [Program Name] over the others?
3. What information on these pages is the most valuable to you?

Duration is the most important, and you guys are doing a great job. Location, contact information.

1. What aspect of the page or the process might Veterans find confusing or unclear? Why?

The location where it says in person or online. When I think location, I think physical address. So right now, it’s Detroit michigang. I wouldn’t use that word. I would say format, learning format.

Part of the confusion, again, you’re exploring right now. So the process should go vet tec first before you can apply to the school.

Ok, so estimate your benefits. What do I need to put in here when we already have a static thing [ gray box ] but I don’t know, bah might change. There might be a purpose to that. So no books, I would imagine?

Again, the application process is a little misleading for me. This is more for the school application process. It doesn’t speak to the vet tec application process.

**Scenario #2 (10 minutes)**

Let say you're interested in taking an online course to build your coding skills. Using the site, how would you find a couple of online courses?

Ok, so I just want to build my skills, any skills? T: any kind of technology skills.

I would tell you right now, this would not be a useful website. If someone is looking for that specific detail, they want to know what language they’re already looking for. I want to see python…I’m not getting much. If I’m a technologist looking to build my skills, you would have to give me a better option, so this would not be a tool that I would use, flat out. So I’m just trying to find out about the programs, essentially. You already have the different ways of looking at it. Let’s assume that I want to do that, and I want to go online. This about my path that I’m coming for.

There’s a tool out there called gi bill approved. You can put the school name in there. [could it be weams?]

You could say, VA educational tool comparison. Any veteran will tell you Montgomery and post 9/11.

*[After participant finds at least two online programs.]*

If you were going to attend one, how would you decide between the two?

[search results page] the only thing I’m comparing is the location of the schools. It doesn’t really give me a qualifying item. What coding language are they offering? It should spell it out. Let’s just say I have an interest in java. By looking at this, how do I know who specializes in java? I would look towards the automobile industry, how they convey, a lot of the used cars. They put down certain features that can drive someone to pick that car, the color of the car, the make. These filter tools, we can even refine it further. Basic element, I start with 400 schools. I only want in florida. My attributes that I would really be able to compare is state and county. I really don’t know what these schools specialize in. I know these are fake, but it’s not really useful.

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

**Potential Probing Questions**

**Profile Page**

1. As you think about the information you see and any additional information that might be helpful:
   * What factors are most important to you as you compare high-tech training providers and programs?
   * What factors would lead you to choose one training provider over another?
   * What factors would lead you to choose one course over another?
2. What thoughts or questions do you have about the list of programs and the information that is available?
3. What thoughts or questions do you have about the questions on the left side of the page?
4. What thoughts or questions do you have on the contents of the gray box on the right?
5. Why do you think the total amount paid to you varies from the monthly basic housing allowance rate?
6. What additional information about a program would help you make an informed decision?

**Results Page**

1. What are your thoughts on the contents of the cards?
2. Why do you imagine the tuition on each card is displayed as a range?
3. What thoughts or questions do you have about the questions on the left side of the page?
4. How did the information on this page contribute to your selection of a school?
5. How would you be interested in narrowing down the list of training providers?
6. In your mind, what is the difference between a school and a training provider?

**Landing Page**

1. What thoughts or questions do you have regarding the questions on this page? [Observe whether the user thinks to select 'VET TEC'.] [Observe to see if they notice that the search filter disappears when they select VET TEC]

**Scenario #3 (5 minutes)**

Let say you're interested in taking classes through Zoom Technologies. How would you learn about the courses they offer?

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

**Follow up questions**

1. What thoughts or questions do you have about finding information on programs that are not listed in the comparison tool?

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

Now that you’ve had a chance to explore the site, I have a few final questions for you.

* What are your general impressions of finding information about VET TEC providers and programs in the GI Bill Comparison Tool?
* What additional enhancements or features would you recommend to improve the overall usefulness of this site?
* How likely are you to use the GI Bill Comparison Tool in real life?
* Thinking about how you typically behave, would you be most likely to use the GIBCT on a desktop, tablet or phone?
* Do you have any additional thoughts or comments you'd like to share?

**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!