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

*June 14, 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? [He’s interested, but not in the field]
2. If you were interested in attending a high-tech training program, how would you decide what course to attend? Based on the education that I had already, I would go off of that. That way, I’m not repeating myself with any coursework.
3. What factors would be most important to you when selecting a course? If I could do long distance.
4. Have you used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? If yes, what was your experience? No, I have not.

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/>

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're moving to Detroit, Michigan and you'd like to advance your IT career by taking advantage of the VA's new high-tech program. Using the GI Bill Comparison Tool, how would you find a training course in Detroit and determine how much money you’d receive to help pay your rent while attending the course?

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

It is something I’ve never seen before, the comparison tool. To me, this is wonderful because I don’t have to go to nobody asking how much money I have left over. Looking at the type of institutions, the bubbles. It gives you 3 varieties. Is there more?

The type of institutions, that’s powerful right there. It is something I haven’t seen before [11:23]

I would select the dropdown, select my status, the type of institution maybe. [he would select Colleges & universities]. Maybe the classes could be hybrid, in person and online, maybe select that one.

T:impressions of first option vs last one, colleges vs training providers?

I think if it was more detailed, not more detailed, but maybe the whole thing maybe spelled out. That way it pops out, and I would want to select it. Hey, what is that? [He ended up selecting the VET TEC training providers].

Oh, wow. It just targeted that one and everything else disappeared. It’s nice. I don’t have to juggle everything else. I’m just comparing everything else that’s available. [He then searched].

[SRP] It breaks it down, into the benefits. It gives the breakdown into what you’re eligible for, the tuition and housing, the hours. It does give you the boxes on the left side as well to break it down even.

[School Profile]

I like the way this is broken down as well, because it has the in person and online. This right here, I ilke it. It tells you everything [benefits panel]. It has a point of contact at the bottom, so that’s beneficial. And then this, asking for the COE and what you need to do to apply. Yeah, it’s very informative, but what I’m looking at is not drowning the page. It’s just to the point. It’s very informative.

T: looking at this, how much money do you think you’ll receive taking this course? That would be the housing allowance in that area. Looks like 2 grand. That’s wonderful right here, this right here, the way it breaks it down, it just tells you. That way you’re not having to go back and wonder what’s my…

T: how would you find a course in Detroit? Ok, this one’s in Illinois, so I’d hit the back button [to search results]. I’m thinking I can type it in here, in the city. If the keyword is country, state. [he eventually looked around some more and located the right courses]

*[After the participant has selected one of the DSDT programs and shared thoughts aloud.]*

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. What amount would you expect to receive to help pay your rent as you take classes?
2. What are your thoughts on why the Monthly BAH rate is different from what you will actual receive while taking the course?
3. Would you expect to receive the same benefits for both programs?
4. How would you determine what amount of BAH you'd receive for the other course?
5. What aspect of the page or the process might other Veterans find confusing or unclear? Why?

**Scenario #2 (10 minutes)**

Let say you work full-time during the day and are interested in taking a web-based course in the evenings to build your technical skills. Using the site, how would you find a couple of web-based courses to compare?

[he tried clicking online only on landing page]

[he eventually was guided to click on vet tec and search. He then selected Online] Online, if I’m working then I’d get paid for the housing. I don’t know if that’s clickable [program link]

T: what is the difference between those two programs? Tuition fee, the length, and formatting. It’s technology pro 2 vs 6, though.

T: would you expect to see a different housing allowance? Yes, it’s a big difference. For me, for my standpoint, if I’m going to pay for education, I want the appropriate training, especially if it’s 12 weeks. I want to hone my skillset. I don’t know if I could juggle 2 weeks. It’s a lot of information.

T: how would you learn more about the classes? Research. I self-study a lot. Every person’s different, but I do a lot of research.

T: how would you research? I would do google search, youtube, barnes and noble to go look at books.

T: how would you do a comparison between the two different schools? Go to their websites. I would look up the school website, see if they have those available, compare those to what they have, see if it’s the same.

T: anything that’s unclear? Maybe embed video to show the process.

*[After participant finds at least two online programs (Code Platoon & DSDT]*

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

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

**Potential Probing Questions**

1. What led you to select [Program Name] over the others?
2. If both courses offered the same certification course in the same city, how would you determine which you'd prefer? (Would user select the preferred program?)
3. How would you learn more about the contents of the course?

**Alternative version of the Search Results Page**

[Return to the result page]

We’d also like your thoughts on a different version of the results page. The version you just looked at showed a list of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ . We have another version that displays a list of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ instead.  
We are interested in your thoughts on which you find most useful.

Would you rather see and be able to compare providers (like on this tab) or courses (like on this tab)?

**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!

C: preferred providers? I was curious if you noticed any of the providers being preferred providers. What are your thoughts on that? To me, as a veteran, I [11:44]

T: where would you see courses about cybersecurity? I don’t know where I’d see that.

A: if you were going to describe the CT to another veteran, what would you say about it? I would say you want to know how much money you have left or how much you have left on your gi or post 9/11, you can look at it really easily online. I’ll point you to the right website. It’s very valuable. To me, I have to call Muskogee and wait on the phone for 30 minutes. I would tell them you can bypass all of that and have the information right away. It’s a valuable tool.

A: are you thinking this is going to be a tool that’s specific to you? If it ever does come out, it would be for myself, and I can verify what I have…

If it’s geared towards veterans… [11:49]