Participant: lou

Date: 06/17/2021 @ 10:15 am

Note:

**Conversation Guide Template for GI Bill Comparison Tool Compare Functionality**

**Moderator logistics**

*Use*[*#feedback-backchannel*](https://dsva.slack.com/messages/C40B45NJK/details/)*in Slack for real-time feedback from observers.*

*Mute your Slack notifications*

*Before the session, send out the*[*observer instructions*](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/platform/research/during-research/howto-observer-instructions.md)*to your observers (Slackbot will do this for you if you type "observer instructions" into*[*#feedback-backchannel*](https://dsva.slack.com/channels/feedback-backchannel)*).*

*In the Attendees section, make sure everyone except the participant is on mute.*

*In the Audio section, click the drop-down arrow and make sure "Play Entry/Exit Chimes" is unchecked*

*Check your [screensharing setup] and share permissions for participants.*

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

**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 looking for schools on the GI Bill Comparison Tool.

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 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 APPROPRIATE:] **You'll be interacting with a prototypes and a demo tool.** This is a demo tool that may not function exactly the way you expect. Some areas of the prototype will be clickable, and some will not. Since it's a demo, none of your actions will affect your actual VA information or benefits.
* **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 - 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)?
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?
  + 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?
* When you first decided to go back to school, what factors were important to you in picking school options?
  + Do you remember any of the schools you were considering?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
  + If yes, what did you use it for?

First impression: normally I would click on the map first because I’m a visual persion (clicks on search by location) so let me see… I prefer to go into the map and drill down vs entering a zip code or state up to but… that’s just me im lazy. But let me type in seattle Washington… okay auto correct I love it… (adjusts to 25 miles and hits search)   
  
um… ah… I’m conflicted because I don’t know if this is… I would like to see a little more of listing of schools… so you got this yeah but then I expect to see a corresponding listing vs seeing them one by one (the cards) I don’t know if that’s on purpose, you got all the information and that’s great… one thing to call out, especially now… people are especially excited about the job prospect after the fact but yeah… im sure I could look into it. Goes to a school profile… um if you’re transitioning me id say this is where the military status maters (looking at profile estimate your benefits) uh… okay this might be something that someone might want to input on the first initial landing page but then again im not… I think its fine here… I think because now you want to drill down specifically about you right? Okay. I just want an opportunity to gather that information before I go in… its just a preference thing for me…  
  
I think its fine… but I don’t know how many schools are listed right so It could get overwhelming.  
  
I would like to search or filter by US new job placement? To narrow the scope further  
  
by default I want to see a map of the usa with all institutions that are approved by the VA and THEN from there put in all the filtering criteria before I actually search.   
  
I think it’s a start… it gives me a starting point and that’s really the good thing abut the tool and I then have to do my own research and I like that you provide the certifying officer that can answer the intricate questions about the va program but sometimes especially on the undergraduate level they might just be looking for basic admissions but not just going into a 1800 office that’s overwheilmign   
  
I would rate this a 1. It gives you the basics… you can put in the name, auto complete,   
  
So this is new to me… Employer? What’s that? I was just expecting schools. Is that some vocational offering? Um I would just have to click on it I guess to learn more information…  
  
I would put all this right here website, everything.. up front. I shouldn’t have to scroll down (profile page contact details)

**First Task: Finding schools - 5 minutes**

* Let's travel back in time and say you found the GI Bill Comparison Tool when you were first exploring schools. Could you show me how you'd use the Comparison Tool to learn about schools you might be interested in attending?

**Things to watch for:**

* What type(s) of search does the user conduct?
* Does the user notice the Compare checkbox?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of finding schools on the Comparison Tool?
* Can you talk to me about the school cards you see here?
* For the benefit estimates you see here, do you believe these are accurate for your situation?

**Second Task: Comparing schools - 20 minutes**

* Let's say you want to get a better idea of the differences between the schools you're considering. How would you use the Comparison Tool to determine which school would be the best option for you?  
    
  lets just say I want to compare the extension and that one…. Okay… do you see the issue here now? Now where do I go next? There is no call to action anywhere…  
    
  Yeah I just don’t like this at all (After finding compare drawer)   
    
  highlight differences… okay lets see what that is… school rating? What is this? What drives this? US news? Peer review?   
    
  I would challenge your team to allow me to take more control on how to filter it out… what other criteria can you give me to filter out father… I challenge you to give me more options to filter it out.   
    
  uhhh for this page again the only thing I really really.. I love this rating right here… I again I shouldn’t have to go to the comparison but that would be number one to filter out father. Tahts the most usefull.  
    
  Can I make a comment about these results.. I hate thisA screenshot of a computer

  Description automatically generated with medium confidence

when I think yale… im only thinking of yale not of art or of law it should all be under one umbella for yale…. That’s annoying.

**Things to watch for:**

* What type(s) of search does the user conduct?
* Does the user notice the Compare drawer?
* Do users notice the sticky header?
* Do users notice the "Highlight differences" functionality?
* Is user able to easily add schools to the compare tray?
* Is the user able to easily navigate to the compare page?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of comparing schools on the Comparison Tool?
* Looking at the compare page, what do you think of the information you see here? Which ones are most important to you? Is anything missing that would be important to you?
* What do you think of the process of comparing schools?
* What do you think of the "Highlight differences" functionality? Is it useful?

**Third Task: YAY Harvard! - 5 minutes**

* You found out that you were accepted into **Harvard**. Even if you don't end up going, you're curious about how **Harvard** stacks up against some of the other schools on your short list. How would you use the Comparison Tool to see how **Harvard** compared to some of your other school options?

**Things to watch for:**

* *If applicable,* can the user easily remove schools from the comparison?
* Where does the user go to remove schools (compare tray, compare page, search results)?

**Upon task completion:**

* How do you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of adding Harvard Law School to your school comparison?

**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!

**Sample Conversation Guides *(note: these links point to resources in the va.gov-team GitHub repo)***

* [Scheduling Accessibility and Usability Study: Complex Recruit, Highly Variable based on User Profile](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/health-care/appointments/research/2017-studies/access-usability/access-usability-conversation-guide.md)
* [Veteran ID Card Discovery Interview](https://github.com/department-of-veterans-affairs/va.gov-team/blob/master/products/veteran-id-cards/research/discovery/discovery-conversation-guide.md)