Participant: Jen

Date: 06/17/2021 @ 1:15 pm

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)?  
  100% disabled Army veteran going to school for criminology
  + 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?  
    its actually funded through the state.
    - When did you start school?  
      uh like 2012
  + 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 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?  
    
  okayyy.. lets see searched connecituct and says “it would be better if it brought up more than one school bc that means you have to click on them on the map… this is a pain having to do this seriously” I just want to see the names of the school instead of all these dots…  
    
  what kind of degree it will cover, certifications, how much they are gonna pay. And how it … and stuff like that.

**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?  
  the way I did it was great but this is not great.. back then I was able to look it up and gt a list and it would populate it was much easier than this.
* 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?  
    
  oh yeah I see the compare button too you can hit compare… (selects 3 schools to compare) so where am I supposed to go when I select all the compare ah okay compare institutions… clicks compare… okay I see you can do it that way….. um that’s kind of a good thing right there. Id give that a 5!  
    
  anything on this page you feel is not important?   
  um.. lets see.. I think they are all pretty important actually… I want to have a screenshot so we can keep it in a file if need be. Being able to save this page  
    
  it would be a lot easier if you keep going down the list… it would be a lot easier that way. Instead of just having all these things over here to have a list that keeps going (is having trouble scrolling on the left hand side)

**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?  
  I would rate it a 3 (easier) and 2 for the map view (harder)
* 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?  
    
  okay lets see compare…. Its not letting me click on it (comparison drawer is full but user doesn’t realize) yeah its not even letting me click on them to compare… hm… I mean I can see the amount and the region but that doesn’t help me with compare.  
    
  Id like to compare at least 4-5  
    
  user cant get back to compare schools (doesn’t realize previously before they are selected)  
    
  do you feel this numbers are accurate on the housing allowance to your situation?   
  yeah that sounds about right… if these numbers were not correct id contact the school or id contact whoever I can contact here.. lets see (scrolls down)

**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?  
  it was okay but you have to figure out where that compare button is…
* 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?  
  it wasn’t that hard for me but anyone who isn’t computer savvy it would be hard.. I’d give it a 4 (hard)

**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)