Participant: Donna

Date: 06/18/2021 @ 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?  
    
  cost, accreditation, and flexibility. I woint like to be able to do online and in person.   
  I am looking at lindonwood university and webster university.
  + Do you remember any of the schools you were considering?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?  
  Yes. (Fairly recently)
  + If yes, what did you use it for?  
    I wanted to know the difference between the 9/11 gi bill or the Illinois veteran grant. I also wanted to see how it would work if I used one or the other and transferred the rest to my son.
* First impression  
  I like what it says, right away I know what im looking at.

**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?  
    
  Okay so um… okay Id go search by location, type my zip code and do within 25 miles and hit search and then um I would put in refine your search and I would just keep the ones for schools um.. vet tec wasn’t there before but I would just keep schools and for school attributes I would remove the ones with warnings and accreditation and hit update results.  
    
  okay um… and then I would just look at the schools and I know that south western is a 2 year school and I would go down and look for a 4 year school and can you scroll down and refine your search and add 4 year school as a search category… it used to be under type of institution… I don’t see that so I guess I would have to go through the schools or if we hit type of school may be that will have it? Okay well I would select public… and then would you also choose offers yellow ribbon program and we can update results.   
    
  Okay I would keep scrolling down… okay then we can go up to the one at Edwardsville. I see its not rated idk if that’s by the va or nationally? I see that its accredited and the gi bill students… I would like to see the school rating if its rated nationally or for whatever reason. I would like to see why is it not yet rated if youre going to say 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?  
  um I don’t think that it went well because I know that schools were missing, I know where the schools are for that major so some schools were missing and im not sure why its not coming up.
* 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?  
  1.
* 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?  
    
  okay so I would have you select the compare box and scroll up… and select university of Missouri st Louis compare box… Okay and after you hit that one and if you go all the way down it should say compare… I don’t know how you would compare then…  
    
  at the bottom of my screen as were looking at it I don’t see anything… I don’t have the control so I cant scan up or down um… I pulled it down I minimized it… yeah I don’t see anything that would help me. (users screen cut off the compare drawer)  
    
  Gi bill students that great, kinda throws me off. Do all students not register for gi bill? Um I would expect type of school to say something more than just school that kind of throws me off. That’s really not helpful to me without more explanation… specialized mission is that private, Jesuit, or religious? What is a specialized mission (these were all N/A) why put the rating here if you’re not going to populate it? Id like to see whats really offered.   
    
  Credit for military training that is wonderful. Veteran programs, yellow ribbon, I like that… 8 keys to veterans success yes but again that’s something im like well what does that mean?  
    
  credit for military training, cost, and housing amount are most important.   
    
  If its not going to be populated that would be a deterrent for me and second guessing why are these N/As there.

**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 say it’s a 2.
* 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?  
    
  I would go back to the initial search so just search Harvard (zero results) did we clear the refinements? Lets see… um…. Take off has no cautionary warnings and then if we keep scrolling oh lets take off um specific type of… put all schools and take off the mileage parameters and update results. Alright so I would hit compare.   
    
  I don’t know why it wont let me add to compare but I guess then I would go to the Harvard profile and see if I could add it there…

**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)