Participant: *Marie*

Date: 05/25/2021 @ 10:15 am

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

**Moderator logistics**

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

*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]*

*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 finding 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?
    - *army*
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?  
  *no currently in ROTC*
  + If yes, which benefit are you using?
    - When did you start school? Where did you go?
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future?
    - Which benefit?  
      *post 9-11*
    - Where are you in the school selection process?  
      *speaking to someone at the VA to see what my options are. There are a lot of programs that offer the degree I’m interested in (masters in public health)*
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?  
  *No, I haven’t.*
  + If yes, what did you use it for?

**Initial Take - 2 minutes**

This is the GI Bill Comparison Tool, which allows you to see what education benefits you can receive at various institutions. Do you have any initial thoughts or questions before we get started?

**First Task: Find a Campus - 5 minutes**

* You've recently moved to **San Antonio, Texas**. Prior to moving, you took a few classes at **ECPI University** and you want to see if there is a campus in your area. How would you use the Comparison Tool to determine if **ECPI University** has a campus in your area?  
  *I would probably search by location* (clicks search by location*) um… enter san Antonio and then search and I would look for ECPI….* (scrolling down*) It would just be listed as ECPI? I would expect that ECPI would be written out whatever ECPI stands for since everything else* (other search result cards) *are written that way…. I would also expect that the results would be in alphabetical order but they aren’t.   
    
  Since its not here I would assume its not in San Antonio so I would go to search by name and type in ECPI and I see this shows all their locations…*How did you think that went? *That was fine but it seems like if you have a specific school you are interested in its better to search by name than location.*

**Things to watch for:**

* Which search option does the user attempt to use (name or location)?
* Does the participant use the autocomplete?
* Does the user attempt to search/filter results?

**Upon task completion:**

* How did 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 seeing if ECPI had a campus in your area?  
  *I would say it’s a 1.*
* How do you think these results were sorted?  
  *Um.. (under search by name) I would think they are sorted by location because I did see a few Virginia or maybe its cost but it looks like its not that… I would expect it to be location. I think the two in Virginia should be side by side. I see a couple in North Carolina and South Carolina… I would think those should be grouped together.*
* *Can you tell me what you are seeing on the search cards?  
  I see GI bill students, I don’t know how important that is. I see the school rating is not yet available. I think the benefit information is helpful. I think it would be helpful to have the school rating. I can’t think of anything else that would be helpful… just location, cost, and the rating… those are the important things.*
* *Are these numbers accurate for your situation?  
  yes they are. (doesn’t open the estimates on the left hand side)*

**Second Task: Location Search - 15 minutes**

* How would you find schools in Raleigh with a commute of 15 minutes or less?  
  *I would put in the location and then select within 25 miles and then I would have to type the address into goggle to see if its within 15 minutes of my house since this (search results) doesn’t show the distance.*
* What factors are important to you for narrowing down a school? *um I see one is a Technical (cosmetology) school and one is more general school so that would help narrow down if you’re not interested in cosmetology you wouldn’t go to that technical school and then I would look at school ratings, programs offered, and tuition and housing benefits.*
* Are there any other types of training you would like to see here or education options?  
  *um no.. it doesn’t need to be… no I cant think of anything else because you have a certificate program and a university… so I think that covers everything. But it doesn’t tell you much about the school so maybe I would add a drop down menu so I can see what these schools offer… programs, certificate vs degree, associates bachelors, masters, or research certificate, and how long does it take to complete the degree and is it computer based or in person based? Um I see this card (schreiner) has regionally accredited so that’s good to see. (For the option without accreditation listed on the card) I would be concerned that I would not complete the degree or waste my time.*
* How far are you willing to go to go to school? *maybe a 30-minute commute?*

**Things to watch for:**

* What search criteria format does the participant use (city, "city, state", "use my current location" etc)?
* Does the participant use the autocomplete?
* Does the user notice the "Update housing and tuition" accordion?
* Does the user interact with the filters?

**Upon task completion:**

* How did 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 on-the-job training in Austin?  
  *um not very well because 25 miles usually takes maybe more than 15 minutes and I would have to still do additional work off the website to see the distance from my house.*
* What do you think of how results are displayed?
* How do you think the search results were sorted?
* What information would be important to you if you were choosing where to take training?
* What types of education options do you think you can find on the Comparison Tool?
* Do you think these benefit estimates are correct for your situation?
* Was there any other information you were expecting to see?

**Third Task: Map Utilization - 5 minutes**

* Do you ever use maps to narrow search results?  
  *yes*
* What are you normally looking for when you use those?  
  *distance and location to see how far it is from my house and what route I want to travel… yesterday I used groupon and they had one.*
* *My favorite aspects is at the bottom of a map when they list results 1-6 and 1 is usually the closest and 6 will usually be the farthest.*
* ~~You've looked at training opportunities in~~**~~Austin~~**~~and~~**~~San Antonio~~**~~separately, but want to see all of those results at the same time. Could you talk me through how you would use the Comparison Tool to see all the training opportunities offered in both~~**~~San Antonio~~**~~and~~**~~Austin~~**~~?~~Hey Marie, thanks for chatting with us today: one question… I believe earlier you mentioned the importance of the benefits you are eligible for on the search result cards. Did you notice the update tuition and housing estimates button? What do you think would happen if you clicked onupdate tution and housing estimates?

*Prompt* Let's say when you performed this search, there were a lot of results. What factors would be important to you in narrowing down your search to find the right place for you?

* Would you be able to narrow down your results here on the tool?

**Things to watch for:**

* How does the user expand/interact with the map?
* Does the user try to enter any additional search criteria into the search fields?

**Upon task completion:**

* What do you think of how the map showed your results?
* What do you think of the filters offered? Which ones would you use? Are there any you wouldn't use?
* For you personally, how far would you be willing to commute to go to school?

**Alternate Questions**

* When you are conducting searches online, do you ever use the map functionality?
* If yes, what are you typically looking for?
* Which sites are you visiting?
* What do you like about those sites? Any frustrations?

**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)