Participant: *Maria*

Date: 05/25/2021 @ 12:55 pm

Note: User is on an iphone testing for desktop.

**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)?  
  *I am a dependent of a deceased veteran of the airforce*
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?  
  *yes for the past 5 or 6 years… undergrad I started in 2015 and graduate I started in 2021. In undergrad I studied organization sciences and at Georgetown I am getting my masters in implied intelligence. Technically I have 11 credits left after this summer but there are more cources im interested in so ill probably finish by the end of next year.*
  + If yes, which benefit are you using?  
    *I think 35*
    - When did you start school? Where did you go?
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future?
    - Which benefit?
    - Where are you in the school selection process?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?  
  *I think I looked at it for Yellow Ribbon and Fry scholarship to see what I was eligible for based on my dads situation*
  + 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 click search by location and type in san Antonio if that’s possible or whatever my address is in san Antonio and yeah within 50 miles is probably what I would select. Um and then I would click on update update tution and housing estimates and do this to match mine… so military status I would change to child and military status um lets say 33 and the next one… um cumulative post 9/11/.. Id click learn more… um I wasn’t in the army so this doesn’t apply to me… I would change this too… um I guess there isn’t an option for that? So lets leave it as what was selected (36+ Months) – What option were you looking for?  
    
  Okay now lets go to refine your search, id just select schools and uncheck VET TEC and I would check is accredited and I want to learn more what is more cautionary warnings…. Okay yeah so lets check ‘has no cautionary warnings’ uh and then… update results. Okay…   
    
  OH so if were looking for ECPI actually, I think id just do search by name… and then refine search and update the state to Texas and hit search. And yeah there we go! Then id click view details… (on profile page) okay private school, unknown size… is that it? Um I think for VET TEC there should be a learn more option because I don’t know what that means… id probably have to do a google search for that but that was my only confusion.*

**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?  
  1, that was very easy.
* Talk to me about the school card your seeing:  
  *Um it says location, I see GI Bill students but its blank next to it but I assume that’s how many GI bill students are currently there… um school rating I think that should explain what that means… is it number 1 on a list or what? Uh GI bill students I don’t really care to know that as long as a school has GI Bill eligibility then im fine being the only one. I would like to use the compare tool so I can compare the benefits im eligible for with other universities, the ratings, and the student size at the university like 14,000 or you know… and then retention rates, graduation rates…and then if you are able to transfer credits, um and distance from my zipcode.*
* Where do you expect ratings to come from?  
  um I don’t know I think there are many resources like USA today or it rated #13 on some list or id even consider changing that for graduation retention rate or accreditation… I don’t really trust school ratings because they feel biased, I look more for graduation and retention rates.
* How do you think these results were sorted?

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

* How would you find schools in Raleigh with a commute of 15 minutes or less?  
    
  *So I would do search by location and type 78205 (given zip code) and um you said 10 or 20 min commute? Uh so id change the radius to within 5 miles um… I feel there should be a within 10 miles option as well but I think 5 is the best option and then I would select search… um… are there no schools? (nothing shows up once the zip code is corrected results load) Okay so we have a few options… okay then I would go into refine my search and select… um okay it doenst have any… lets just go back to the 17 results. So these don’t have how close it is to my zip code… lets click san Antonio and view details… is there any… can you scroll down? Um…. I uh… what was my zip code? Okay so I think the main campus 78212 must be close then so that’s probably a decent option. Um if you go back to the last page and click compare okay um can you scroll down? Im looking for another school id be interested in going to based on if its vocational, technical or religious universities… so yeah my thought process here… id click on st marys because its regionally accredited, uh lets scroll back up and see what else is accredited… oaky the university of the incarnate word… uh no thank you… id like to actually recognize the name of the school so no. Trinity, yeah we can compare that… now lets compare those… how do we compare… I’ m not sure.  
    
  Okay lets go into trinity (since functionality for compare is not built out yet) and view details… okay the zip code looks like its in the same area and then lets click on St Marrys… scroll down to location and it looks like this zip code is farther but let me do a quick google search… Okay so it’s a 10 minute commute so id go with either san Antonio or trinity.  
    
  When I see accreditation I think of prestige… I don’t even know if that’s right… let me do a quick google search because I don’t want to sound dumb in front of you guys… okay so they are officially recognized uh… okay so um I mean Harvard is a regionally accredited university so to me that is prestige and like uh… easily transferable uh… like uh um… like they meet the standards of what schools should… if that makes sense?*

**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?  
  pretty well, definitely easy… uh can we click back to view details of trinity… um… so private school, 4 year program, medium size… okay it gives you… and lets scroll down now… (estimate your benefits curious about scholarships and va funding) um I think the student complaints a nice tool… are these just GI Bill students? I’m assuming. Yeah I guess that’s helpful… yeah so this gives good information for sure. And definitely an easy process…
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very easy and 5 is very hard, what did you think of finding schools with a 15 minute commute from San Antonio? in Austin?  
  *uh in the middle (3?) because it should have some sort of estimated distance from the zip code I put in so that I don’t have to do a individual search on google with each address.*
* 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**

* 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**?

*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)