Participant: ed

Date: 05/26/2021 @ 10:00 am

Note:

**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 retired military*
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?  
    *Navy*
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?  
  *Yes, um im kind of in hiatus at this minute with the devil bug… Did yall have a pandemic? It was kind of a thing like last year haha before they got rid of the devil president it seemed to cure the pandemic. I have two classes to finish (in school) It’s a liberal studies degree which sounds a lot more complicated than it really is… I walked in the door with like 240 credit hours and they said oh gee wiz and I said yeah no kidding… because ive always taken classes whenever I wanted to learn something I had credit from like 12 different institutions and so we were just trying to button it up and make it work some how and then the devil bug hit and it was just time to take a break.   
    
  I was pre post 9/11 so I didn’t have the same benefit structure even with VOC rehab with post 9./11 you get close to 4300 a month in the new York metropolitan area but in Tennessee you get about 1400 … about a 3000 dollar difference and with pre 9/11 you only get 740… so you get… yeah it’s a big difference.* 
  + 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?
    - Where are you in the school selection process?
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
  + 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 **Raleigh, NC**. 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?  
    
  *(User types ECPI in name search and hits search… search pulls zero results so he clicks on refine your search and scrolls down, hits updates results and sees 3 results.) Okay. Theres your housing benefit right there at $1224 but if the school was in New York it would be $4300. For my situation (these numbers) are not accurtate. But for most people, as my generation ages out, my Montgomery GI Bill will be less and less relevant. Im good for $700 a month in housing but frankly I wouldn’t bother with it because most of the people from my era are the Vietnam era and we know we’re on the far edge of relevance. Most of the post 9/11 are in their late 40s even so were not a big data pool you need to fool with.   
    
  can you make this data accurate to your situation?  
  uh possibly here (clicks on update your tuition and housing drop down) there we go… looky there! (hits update results) that’s interesting… it adjusted the housing benefit up… that is absolutely not correct.. and VRE which is 31.. there, that is more correct on VRE chapter 31, this would need to change(in the drop down) and say chapter 31um the DEA that’s correct… but the mongomery thing and pre 9/11 might need some adjustment nickels and dimes worth of adjustment as far as the numbers go… but all of that stuff is really complicated and there Is a guy who is on reddit his name is scovetretired I believe… he is very prevalent on tehre as a moderator and he works with a kassas veteran service offices at a state universities and he is probably one of the most schooled individuals I have ever seen because he knows the answers right now in a verry complex field. I have no affiliation its just hes there 24 hours a day literally helping and correcting very toxic and bad information that people put out.  
    
  … you can change the world. That is a fact.   
    
  I despise for profit universities but I will tolerate this for a moment because I know when hiring people see a for profit university they throw a persons resume away. Infact if youre a veteran you can go to an ivy leage school without a whole lot of fan fare you just have to do reasonably well at a community college and then go in as a sophomore.*

**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 it was easy.
* How do you think these results were sorted?

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

* How would you use the CT to find schools in raliegh NC for a commute of 15 minutes or less?   
  *(Scrolls down existing search results page on seach by name) um… well up here it says search by location but that’s no going to populate ( I think he said this because the mouse pointer was a text icon not a click icon) hmm view details?( Scrolls down the profile page) I like this there’s a lot of data but back to the commute side… I don’t know how to do that.  
    
  My goodness looky there, this (his mouse) should have turned into a pointy finger thing because this thing (text thing) unless it makes a finger at me I don’t respond… (exploring location search) Okay interesting… (scrolling through results from durham nc and Raleigh nc)*

*How would you find out that one of these schools gives you a commute under 15 minutes?  
I intuit that I would click compare and it would do something… I don’t know what.   
  
hmm well heres the distance… well I myself would write this down on a piece of paper or print out the map or something that’s a whole lot less intuitive than what you probably have… this is really delux and highly developed… I was not expecting this at all. What I like is the degree of functionality and the depth and intuitiveness of what your people have come up with… im used to futsing around and printing the map and then getting the information from over here and …. Im used to having to do all that and for this to have all already been down… Its like getting in the car and saying okay siri take me to the grocery store… I would never consider that but in 10 years time for you to control your own speed and velocity and route is going to be the exception as opposed to the norm…. Im coming to grisp that somethigns are done for me… I am really impressed by this… you guys should run the VA websites. See you guys inherited a bunch of crap some years ago and… as you’ve been able to develop a bunch of these tools from the ground up to where youre not doing it on top of somebody eleses trash its incredibly \_\_\_ that you don’t build on sand you build with a strong base…  
  
Okay so id probably get rid of some of thse outliers id click them off I could…*

*Do you think you can decrease the distance anywhere?  
First clicks the map zoom in and out then hovers over the drop down… its not narrowing down the list automatically based on my zoom and I get it because it would bog down…*

**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?
* 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)