Participant: Marco

Date: 05/27/2021 @ 09:18 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)?  
  Veteran
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?  
  Post 9/11 gi bill for a masters degree in medical or masters of science
  + 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?  
  no I think It launched after?
  + 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?  
  *to start id go to search by location and type Raleigh north Carolina, and select that one “ Raleigh, north Carolina, united states” (within 5 miles) okay and hten I guess I could either refine my search or scroll in on the map… id probably scroll in on the map because im pretty decent at georgraphy from the military but it looks like you aso have a functionality on the left hand side to refine your search so maybe click on that… (opens refine search) okay…. So that doesn’t really uh… is there a functionality to type in the name of the school? Id expect that in a pop out easily visible when you first come to the map… okay it looks like… can you go to search by name again? The challenge is I don’t know this might be a school that has dozens of campuses.. but lets put in ECPI and uh… well lets select ECPI University-raleigh from the drop down… that gives you some options I think its that first one right there… um some schools have many different campuses so that might be challenging to find the right school by name if you don’t know the exact name of it… Uh… I didn’t see on the map function too does it allow you to scroll over those icons that it did a little popout.. not a massive one but a little one that way if It says hey this is in the center of the city somewhere that would be good. The geographic option is good to if a user is looking for housing options or places close to employment or family or whatever it is they may be using as an identifier….  
    
  What information would u expect in that pop out?  
  a little field that just said what the name of the school is… um like whats in that box in the left hand side basically…a condensed version of that basically.. maybe its just the name of the university, the address… whatever is relevant.   
    
  school rating, not yet rated… not sure what that means… regionally accredited, not sure what that means, by what body? Um the rest of the information is good. Uh maybe having a ledged somewhere to define what that accredidation means.   
    
  im guessing the school rating could be rated by the VA or US school news reports or some external agencies… that would need to be defined better.  
    
  click on a letter on the map… okay cool so it scrolls to the card.. uh its very similar to the va location finder too so that’s adequate… um in some areas like in New York where there are dozens of schools It might be more challenging to navigate…  
    
  what happens if you scroll in really close.. it would be cool if I could scroll in to the neighborhood area… yeah see that, that I think is helpful.* A computer screen with a map

  Description automatically generated with low confidence *being able to see the mass transportation hubs, that’s really helpful.  
    
  It might also be helpful, is there a way to overlay va facilities with this dataset… so how far does a veteran have to go to a va facility if they are going to a school somewhere? That would be helpful  
    
  Do you feel the numbers in this benefit information are accurate to your situation?  
  Yeah I mean if that was the school you are looking for. If you didn’t qualify for 100% of the GI Bill its scaled accordingly right… I don’t know if its worth putting an asterisk there so some people might not be receiving the full rate here.   
    
  If I click view details what do you expect?  
  Its hard to tell… is it view details for the compare, for what? Because its its own little box. Okay so its view details for the specific school… I think that would make more sence under the schools name because before its hard to tell is it view details of the comparison or something else? You know what might be good to have on there…. Every school generally has a veteran coordinator that works with the school… oh, there they are… the contact information for them I only see a general number at the top… general website here… if we could have a certifying officials contact information beyond just a name because that’s not really helpful for me.*

**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?
* How do you think these results were sorted?

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

* How would you find schools in Raleigh with a 15 min commute or less…  
  Lets go to refine your search.. um I guess not, lets go back to the top… I guess you could change the functionality of the milage there to 5 miles, that’s easily a 15 minute commute… that’s probably how I would user it but again I’m looking at it from the lens of a new yorker so I’m thinking about where is public transportation near the university.  
    
  Okay I would refine those searches… I assume it also allows you to uh… what’s in the other one, update tuition and housing estimates… oh I see it can calculate based on your individual place.   
    
  the compare function… that would be next for me, does it allow you to compare multiple schools? Thats what I’m assuming.. would it build some type of work sheet or spreadsheet type document of data I can quickly scan back and forth.. or if I had 15 – 20 schools on there it would be nice to have some document I could save as a pdf that might be worthwhile but if it just spits out a sperate page with 15 schools on that’s going to be hard to read with that much data… but if its consolidated on a spreadsheet that I can print out that might be interesting.  
    
  Id compare GI Bill programs, cost, degrees.  
    
  What does a 15 minute commute mean? Is it public transit, driving, traffic? Um… Is it keeping that based on milage or commute time? In new York some places might be 5 miles away but take you 30 minutes to commute. I think millage is probably more relavant but um… there might not be a clear way to drive if the tool is calculating on a straight line distance vs roads and highways…

**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?  
  *Probably a 3 because it doesn’t seem intuitive here I mean 5 miles is probably in certain areas is a 3 minute commute but in other areas is a 30 minute commute… milage and commute time are not one and the same.*
* 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)