Participant: Marsha

Date: 05/27/2021 @ 01:00 pm

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 served as an amry reserve ambassador for North Carolina but I am a retired soldier.* 
  + If Veteran, which branch of service?
* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?  
  *yes my post 9/11 Gi Bill to study nursing. I started at a state school, noth carolina central university and hten I transferred to ECPI… I don’t have a lot of positive comments to say about that school… I wish the gi bill was only for state supported schools.*
  + 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?  
  *yeah but im not sure what the definition of the comparison tool is.*
  + 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?  
  before task was given she searched for ECPI UNIVERSITY – RALEIGH*… one thing I will say is you cannot get a official degree with ECPI because its not accredited and to me this is very misleading. Once you graduate you are not actually eligible to be employed in a veterans administration hospital.   
    
  I see its Gi Bill students, not yet rating, you may be eleigible for up to and gives you your benefits, then I see compare and view details… I see a few others… (reads off names)   
    
  If I was still looking for schools I think this would absolutely find this helpful  
    
  Suppose I wanted to take another curriculum like criminal justice or IT work.. can I search for that anywhere? Yes, It would be a usefull tool if I was a young person just out of the army to use my GI Bill to see what was available near the city I wanted to go to. ECPI at least has a Raleigh campus but Devry… I don’t know… another thing, when you go to these private schools, none of their classes will transfer to other schools the way you can if you went to a state supported school but when you go to a private for profit school that isn’t the way it works, if I dropped out now, I lack three classes to finish, but If I wanted to dropout or transfer to another school none of it would transfer. I think our tax dollars should go towards schools that have greater flexability…  
    
  I know there is a move affront in congress to limit how much money the government pays to these private for profit schools because I think they sometimes capitalize on veterans. Like on the two schools you have up here… none of my work would transfer from ECPI to Devry University….*What types of information is important *to know if its fully accredited, to know their academic rating or see their standing in a specific curriculum, to be pro military, it also helps if they are a yellow ribbon school, that is something I looked at. And in this city, Raleigh North Carolina… that’s the only nursing school available. Durham however has several and so that is one thing I looked at, how much I would get in housing between the different locales.*What do you think the school rating on these cards refers to? *To me that would imply how well veterans are satisfied but that’s another subject I wish could be checked out because they really tout that these are best for veterans but that’s rated by a publication but what that means I don’t know… It might be they are best for vets because it pays the bills…   
    
  Can you tell me what school rating means?... Well that would be helpful if you knew what that rating was because I know that school didn’t input the information correctly and that caused a big debt for me and most people who input the information don’t know much about veterans and if they make a mistake it could cause a lot of trouble for the veterans.*

**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 - Wasn’t hard at all… I drive through Raleigh… the main reason I changed was because its closer to me than Durham after they told me it was fully accredited and after which I learned it was not… they are sales people.*
* 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?  
  I don’t see any option for location… maybe I can scroll down… or call the school to see how far my drive would be. I don’t know on that platform I would be able to do that  
    
  where yould you expect to find that?  
  under the address of the schools where is says refind your search, maybe that’s where it could be if you click a link there… I see location but I don’t see any .. I see search by location in the upper right hand but its broken and muted… okay if I could click on… okay lets see I would put a zip code and drop this down to less than 25 miles… and are these schools in general or schools rated for veterans?   
    
  I would expect them all to be institutions of higher learning… (scrolling down the search result list and reading the names of each school) well when I tried last time I couldn’t find anything so I called them (hovers mouse over view details… scrolls through map)   
    
  We have 66 search results… whats important to you in order to narrow that down?  
  um im concerned with the travel time so (clicks drop down and updates to 5 miles and clicks search) I cant see the rest here because that part on the left doesn’t scroll down but I can only scroll on the map… (shes scrolling with a click and drag… clicks the letter on the map and the left and scrolls some letters were not clicking.) and see… ecpi isn’t even populating on this screen and I know that’s in this zip code… so you don’t have all of them showing in this prototype…   
    
  back in the day these location tools were very helpful…   
    
  okay I dont think on this prototype im allowed to change the state to Virginia here is it only for North Carolina? Okay let me just put it in here (scrolls to the top and types in Boydton, Virginia 23917, there wont be anything there so we can put 50 miles and see… okay you can click on these that’s probably southwest Virginia community college and that’s a good option to have and if you narrow the parameters you can limit the options. So if you updated it to 5 miles, this is out in farm country so you would have nothing… even at 25 miles I see 1.  
    
  I think its showing as the crow flies, distances… like in waze if a crow went one way to the other is like 80 miles and then its actually 118 miles.  
    
  So what is the largest commute that you would be willing to do personally  
  Well when I was at NCC it was about 70 miles search way so depending on the traffic it was taking about 4.5 hours… but when I shortened the commute to Raleigh that shortened the commute to about half an hour so that helped but Im not a fan of private schools so I wish I never would have gone there (ECPI) because I spent a lot of my GI Bill and I cant transfer those credits anywhere … but I think it would be really helpful to have that tool and I think the radiuses you set are reasonable… I mean most people wont drive more than 75 miles but that’s what I was doing. You spend all that time in your commute and gas money and then you have to get home and start studying. I think the GI Bill was designed to go to school where you live… I mean that’s not going to cover your cost in the dorm in the university.

**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)