Participant: *Caitlin (P2)*

Date: Wednesday February 10th 2021 @ 9:00am

**Discussion Guide for CT Redesign for Search, Compare and Initial Profile Page**

*When the participant is ready, begin the session with the following intro*

**Mobile Sharing setup**

For iPhone:

* Tap ‘Share content’ (Green button at bottom middle of the screen) If you can’t see the zoom menu, tap anywhere on your screen once ant it should appear.
* Tap on Screen
* Tap Zoom
* Tap start broadcast. After a count of 3, the entire device screen will be shared into the meeting
* Tap the red bar at the top of your screen when you are ready to end the share
* Send prototype link to them via chat

IF THEY CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT They can tap "share content" then tap "web URL" and just enter in VA.gov For troubleshooting screen sharing in iOS, reference the Zoom documentation here <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005890803-iOS-Screen-Sharing>

**Intro - 5 minutes**

Thanks for joining us today! My name is Amy and I also have some colleagues on the line observing and taking notes. Today we're going to talk about searching and comparing 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.
* **You'll be interacting with a prototype 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.

* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?  
  *Yes I have used some of my benefit. I think it was 1 years worth but im only allotted 40% GI Bill*
  + If yes, which benefit are you using?  
    *Im not currently using it.*
    - When did you start school? Where did you go?  
      *2015-2016*
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future?  
    *yes lets say 2022 time frame id like to be applying to graduate schools.* 
    - Which benefit?
    - Where are you in the school selection process?
* When you were first looking for schools, how did you go about finding potential options? What was important to you?  
  *first it’s the degree program and finding a program that suits my professional needs and secondary is how easy it is to use my GI Bill at the school. Does the school have the administrative bandwidth to support my use of the GI Bill. If they invest time and thought to helping students leverage the benefit that is appealing.   
    
  usually, I get this information from the school veterans page on a college page. That would be an initial criterion for if I would consider pursuing that school more.*
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
  + If yes, what did you use it for?

**Initial Take - 5 minutes**

This is the GI Bill Comparison Tool, which allows you to see the benefits you can receive at various schools. Can you tell me what your initial thoughts are when you see this page? What do you think you can do here?  
  
*I lkke the simplicity of this little dashbored and the drop downs leave it up to the user and there isn’t overwhelming details… I like that you can start with either location or school… I think this is all the information I need at the beginning. I can’t imagine needing to get more granular from the beginning.   
  
My expectation would be to see … approximately how much… I don’t expect a very personalized analysis… what’s under benefit estimates… okay here we go… I think the major thing that determines is if you are full time, part time, or online learning, and is the GI Bill accommodating the fact that most people are online learning? Um I’m not sure what’s going to happen when I click on these things… I’d expect to pick if I am taking online learning to be able to select that… if this were a spreadsheet it would be its own pivot table… I might pull that to the front.*

**First Task: Radius from Location - 10 minutes**

* Let's say you aren't sure what you want to major in, but you're moving to **Daytona, Florida** and want to find a school within 10 miles of your location because you don't want a long commute. How would you use the Comparison Tool to find schools that are within that driving distance?  
    
  *sure so I would put my zip code into the location, and then I would use the drop down menu for the radius… I would like to use a zip code because its more accurate… I would then use the drop down menu to select the correct radius that applies to me and either hit enter or click search.   
    
  okay so its showing me schools within that 10 mile radius, very cool.  
    
  Very easty, very intuitive… Didn’t require extra steps… I will say these schools in general are just schools that have a relationship with the GI Bill… I wonder about schools that are not accosiated with GI Bill  
    
  I like that they are broken down by accreditation but I cant tell what order they are in… its not alphabetical, is it max to min? In my mind you would group them by accreditation because that’s been a sore spot for a number of years with the GI Bill funding. Maybe even having on the side margin, probably the right margin, to have a definition what these accreditations mean without having to click out of the page. I mean if it were me id just open a separate tab but I realize not everyone is like that.*

**Things to watch for:**

* Where does the user look to enter the search criteria?
* Do they click the search fields?
* What dropdowns (if any) do they open?
* What location format do users say they would input?

**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 schools by distance from location?  
  *Very easy so 1.*
* Looking at the benefits for these schools, let's say someone had only served in the military for 2 years. Do you think these numbers accurately represent the benefits they would receive?  
  *This current view does not reflect that or I think we would require to have another a filter…. Hovers to your benefit estimates… uh up top you already sorta have it. So I would expect it to be under that drop down but maybe it would serve well to have another drop down for percentage eligibility… because once you click through the other drop downs… for example the post 9/11 active duty service id almost pull this out. Id expect to tailer the percentage to what I already know… um it might be easier to pull this question out and put it up front or a second tab under refine estimates or just starting out? Or Returning user?  
    
  it says refine estimates and hten, your benefit estimates and so id like to see percentage and in person or not.*  
    
  - If not, how would they go about determining what benefits they would receive?
* How do you think the school search results were sorted?
* Was there any other information you were expecting to see?  
  *I don’t think so.*

**Things to watch for:**

* How does the user try to get back to the home page?

**Second Task: Degree / Program Search - 10 minutes**

* Let's say you've recently heard of someone who received a Bachelor's in **Citizenship Activities**. You don't know of any schools that offer this program, but are curious about what the program would be about. How would you use the Comparison Tool to see if any schools covered by the GI Bill offer this as a program of study?  
    
  *id click degrees and majors dropdown and search the major id rate that level 1.*

*Prompt* You see that **Indiana University-Bloomington** is highly rated by Veterans. If you wanted to ask a few questions about the school, how would you use the Comparison Tool to find out who to talk to?  
*okay so I would select view details and then… there is contact details here* (clicks jump link at top) *and then that’s how I would go about it.*

*Anything stand out to you as interesting?*

*In general um the out of pocket tuition and wether or not they give a book stipend… um quick note on the banner up top, not sure I understand the order of these link, I see that hey are important on the page but um… I guess they are in order of the representation on the page… maybe they need a different click box so it is clear that it is jumping down the page… maybe add a ‘scroll to;’ in front of the links.*

*Um this box in institution details is really busy, especially the informatin on the left… its not clear why these links are bolded and underlined… um yeah the rest looks good, easy to find.*

*Prompt* Where would you go to see how much tuition would be covered at **Indiana University-Bloomington**?

**Things to watch for:**

Part 1

* Where does the user look to enter the field of study?
* Do they click the search fields?
* What dropdowns (if any) do they open?
* Do they open the "Level of degree" dropdown?

Part 2

* Does the user click any of the jumplinks or just scroll?

**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 schools by program of study?
* What do you think of the school cards?
* How do you think the school search results were sorted? (Why were some schools higher or lower on the list?)
* Was there any other information you were expecting to see?

**Third Task: Compare Schools - 15 minutes**

Looking at these search results, let's say you're interested in **University of Massachusetts-Amherst** and **Indiana University-Bloomington**. How would you go about comparing these two schools to see which school would be a better fit for you?  
  
*I would select the compare checkbox and then hit compare.*

scrolling down page…. *Huh… good, that’s fine (hovering over estimates) okay why do I care about principles of excellence? I guess if I knew what these were already I would probably care but its not an intuitive terminology… but I guess if I did some reaserch and read up then I would care…*

*I would go bck to search results and deselect the school I had selected… Um when you are at the bottom of these pages I think there should be a scroll to top carrot because this is very laborious   
  
there should be a toggle somewhere that stipulates online or inperson? I know there was a button in the search page but what if you are 90% online but have to go in once per quarter to meet your cohert? How does that impact that selection? That’s where it starts to get tricky when comparing these side by side, its unclear if that dataset has been applied here. Like what if I want to take citizenship activities and one school only offers that program online and another only offers that program in person? That’s not covered here.*

*Um I literally don’t care if a school has principles of excellence or other programs but Im not everybody so…   
  
um in cautionary information, this space on the page doesn’t feel entirely relevant… um if a school has more than 50 complaints which is where I would start to consider a dataset worth trcking but I think honestly the cautionary information and the complaints is not value added if it’s a dataset that is fewer than 50. Its all subjective. This is not value added to me.*

*Prompt* After looking at these two schools, **University of Massachusetts-Amherst** doesn't look like a good option for you. How would you remove that school from the comparison and add another in its place?

**Things to watch for:**

* Is the user able to successfully add schools to the gutter to compare?
* Is the user able to navigate successfully to the Compare page?
* How does the user try and navigate back to the search 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 comparing schools?
* How many schools would you want to be able to compare at one time?
* What information is important for you to see when comparing schools?
* Was there any other information you were expecting to see on the Compare page?
* Was there any information you didn't think was necessary?
* What did you think of the general layout of the page?

**Post-Task Interview - X minutes**

* Any questions for me?
* What were you expecting with the compare tray  
  *I didn’t expect the tray to pop open right away, I want to select the schools first and then select a compare button when im imr eady.*

**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)