Participant: *Stephen (P5)*

Date: Thurs. Feb 11th @ 12:45 pm

Testing on: Desktop [ ] Mobile [ x ]

**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 exhausted my post 9/11 gi bill but I’m interested in the stem supplemental scholarship funds.*
  + If yes, which benefit are you using?
    - When did you start school? Where did you go?  
      *I used part of the 9/11 bill at loyelll ? in new Orleans and another part at GW for grad school.*
  + If no, do you plan on using your benefits in the near future?
    - Which benefit?
    - Where are you in the school selection process?  
      *very early in the process, I work full time but my employer likes when people pursue advanced degrees, ive heard from others that they can make room for that so you know… very early in the process.*
* When you were first looking for schools, how did you go about finding potential options? What was important to you?  
  *contacting colleagues, going to websites for different schools, but I haven’t used too many of the veteran sites… really at this point predominantly using people in my network but I think I’ll be using more online tools in the future.*  
    
  *for me academic rigor, esteemed universities, the program ranking in relation to other schools, the standing of the program itself and how that compares to other schools. Then its you know is there a veteran scholarship and how does the school rank for veteran relations compared to other schools. That’s a big consideration and then you know, other peoples opinions – colleagues and others in my grad school program.*
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?  
  *ive heard of it… I think I may have used it in the past but it may have been in the early stages, if it was just a document that had the funds the school had but I don’t know if I used an interactive system.* 
  + 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?  
  
*Yeah so um… having used the va website for healthcare and things like that… it does look familiar as far as the font, layout, the icons and what not… its kind of.. on my phone it looks relatively squished towards the middle of the screen but if this was the actually tool this self I might be able to manipulate it a little more… it looks somewhat familiar… you know what, it looks more familiar to me, maybe I have used this in the past.*Observation: User attempted to rotate screen.   
*looking at this page, it seems like I can search for universities of interest based ON A ZIP code, city, state… which is nice because I know that it can impact your housing allowance, that naturally is a consideration for me. Um… employers, im not srue I know what that would bring up if im looking at it for education purposes.*

**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?  
    
  *so I don’t know the zip for Daytona off hand but oh I would put in Daytona beach… um I guess id click ten miles here and then… I would just hit the search button.*
* Question before scroll. You mentioned you don’t know the zip for Daytona do you have a preference?   
  *yeah I would because if you are searching by the city you’re talking about the incorporated metropolitan area but the zip code might be a slightly larger land area… and a lot of universities actually fall outside of the metropolitan area, so if I knew the zip code id actually go with the zip code. I would prefer the option because I know there’s all sorts of maps that capture different areas and I’m thinking of a urban policy class.*
* On search results page  
  *so It says’ based on this critera…’ so it gives me information about nearby collegses, how they are rated by other veterans um that wouldn’t be a major consideration for me but I see it says gi bill students… that’s sorta interesting because I know some schools have caps so Id want to know that im not over that cap. Tuition and housing is an important consideration for me…um I like seeing the 100% in-state that would be nice if I was in state, id like to see that. Id be scrolling through this page for the housing and tuition, things 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?  
  *I know it’s a subjective scale but id have to say 1, really easy.*
* 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?  
  *right so the tuition would be applicable um so I think you would ne 36 months for post 9/11 so id want to know that right but the language says that you …   
    
  I see that it says for up to so that’s kinda interesting…*  
  - If not, how would they go about determining what benefits they would receive?
* How do you think the school search results were sorted?  
  *so I would expect since I searched for the city that it would probably be based on the proximity from the location, I put in but I don’t see anything that says miles away… um I know its not alphabetical but I assume that its as it extends outward form the middle of the city itself.*
* Was there any other information you were expecting to see?  
  *yeah, I would probably want … whatever the accreditation is, I would want it to show the ones that are most widely accreditation to the most limited accreditation and I would hope that the VA wouldn’t encourage people to go to schools that lack a certain threshold of accreditation. I think that the VA has an obligation to not promote for profit universities or lesser credited universities, I think it’s a lot of waste for tax payer funds to go to schools that give students degrees they can’t do anything with…  
    
  yeah so I see national, regionally, hybrid… I don’t know that if I clicked on those what would come up but I would hope there is some sort of hierarchy by how accredited those are.   
    
  I like the tuition information, you know, I know its hard to create a ranking between schools, but I think the primary consideration should be how is this school viewed by the ACE accreditation and how does it rank compared to others.   
    
  The VA has a responsibility to funnel people into reputable universities.*

**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?  
    
  *so I cant see the right part of the screen because I cant scroll over but maybe id go to refine search or compare? Id probably go to refine search or compare based on what I see now. Let me refind search… OH here we go… so id go to degrees, citizenship activities and I click that and um id probably unclick the 2 years… exclude results warnings and school closings huh that’s interesting,….\*\*\*  
    
  Then id hit search at this point… okay there is only 3 results but it seems like a specialized major so maybe I wouldn’t expect a lot of results.*

*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 im on Indiana university (search results page) maybe just view details maybe? And …. (reading sections out loud… all this great information…) student feedback… my eyes got to that but I don’t know if id go there… okay maybe id go to contact details and contact someone from the veteran affairs office. Um I don’t see a lot… id probably go to that now that I found the contact information.. yeah, I think id go to that.*

1-5 how was this? *Yeah I thought um… slightly more difficult than the location because that’s just so obvious, thinking back it required an extra click or two but probably a 2.*

*Noticed the breadcrumb at the top to go back to search results.*

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

Does the information you see in the card enough? *I geuss it would be nice to see how the program specifically ranks against other ones, I know only three came up… so that would be usefull or maybe information about the faculty perhaps, I don’t know what that… esteemed faculty members or hmmm I mean it constains a lot of useful information, gi bill, rated by veterans, tuition, but I guess some information on how it compares to other universities… its enough information now to let me search for more later.*

**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?  
*yeah so I would probably use this compare thing, I click compare then un click compare… hmm… (drawer doesn’t open so user doesn’t notice that it selected… oh I see… Id hit compare here and compare there and then …  
  
at compare page: huh okay… so it wasn’t immediately intuitive that I had to click both, maybe if when I selected the first one if a box poped up to say compare to what… that would be helpful.., it was a little more difficult than I presumed but after I clicked around a little but I figured it out. Id rate this a 3 probably.   
  
calls out the veteran programs as something he would like to compare feels it might be important…. Cautionary warnings.. uh I don’t know what that is but id proably read the information there… um student complaints id take with a grain of salt.   
  
this is certainly usefull that we can have it side by side like this… If you could scroll through the page*

*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?  
  
*right so I go to the bottom of the screen a lot so id hit compare… that didn’t do anything so id go back to the tool again and uncheck one and check the one in virginia and id go to compare again and uh… compare schools.*

**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?

**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)