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

**P6 (Mobile) - Miles**

*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 in the past, a number of times. 1.5 master’s degrees and a professional certification. Not currently using them, but plan to use the remaining balance to do a Master’s degree completion program either later this year or early next year.
* It’s always a learning experience, or a re-learning experience when I use them [benefits]. But I’ve always found answers with VA counselors and others
  + 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?
* When you were first looking for schools, how did you go about finding potential options? What was important to you? First and foremost, I go to Google and type in a couple of things. When I do it, I have an idea of what I want to study, my most recent thing was a graduate certificate in acquisition. I would type in acquisition supply chain management supply chain management and gi bill and see what came up. I may find a list of schools there and go through the respective websites. It’s one of the things I’ve commented in past interviews is that there wasn’t a one stop shop where I could type in “I want this type of degree” If I find a program I’m interested in, I would reach out to the university directly. Ideally they would have a Veteran contact to get more info and would go from there.
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? No and in fact, that’s what drew me in to signing up for this survey. This is kind of exciting for me and if there is a tool I’m excited to learn about it.
  + 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?

Initially this would imply to me that I have an idea based on geographic location or the specific school that I would want to pursue a degree or certification on. I can type in here my installation…in Near box in Pentagon Washington DC. I’m guessing that it will take me to schools that will accept GI Bill funds as payment.

**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?
* I’m just using what I see on my screen or can I click on other tabs. If I knew I was going to Daytona FL and brick and mortar classes..me being me, I would have done a Google search ahead of time. And would input “Daytona institute of technology”. Realistically, I would type in the location here, city, state and put it there. I assume it would put out all the schools in that area and I could narrow it down by miles. Or completely online. That’s my assumption. I think just having a general knowledge of what schools are down there. It’s just what I would do personally. It would be like anything else. I would get on Google. To see what doctors were nearby if I was moving there. It’s just my default, go to. I think it’s a safe assumption that a lot of people do that initially.
* If I know I haven’t decided on university, but want to perform research. Location, distance. Refine search. Yes, I’m taking classes in person…yeah, there’s lots of options on here. My assumption is if I click No – it’ll take me just to online degrees, which may not be near Daytona FL, but offer a fully online degree program. 4 years, 2 years. Yeah, I like this. It enables me to go through and clarify my status as a Veteran or not. Which various GI Bill benefits I want to use. Can I click on Institution type of employer? I don’t know what employer is…institution type is that a technical college versus a state school. If it is in fact located in FL…maybe something I would want to consider in terms of tuition costs. Warnings and school closings…that’s interesting. From what I’ve read, that would be about predatory schools. Obviously that’s a big news story with schools taking advantages of Veterans. I would be curious as who is issuing those warnings and closings. Perhaps people who have had negative experience with those schools or if that’s something from the VA where these schools have violated trust of GI Bill or Veterans. I think that’s good, I’m just thinking there might be a better way to label it. Am I way off? Level of degree, search a major…this is what I’m interested in. I could type it in the box to see which schools have all that.
* So that took me back to the previous screen.
* Amy prompted to click Search.
* Search schools…refine search…okay (sees results). If I were to click on this “View details” box…I guess it would give me more info about the university itself. Maybe it would be better if there was a Veteran’s Coordinator that someone could use to contact. An email address or something
* Prompted about cards – I can see the tuition benefit plus the housing benefit if I was going there full time. I like the GI Bill students so I can see how many people have been there as well as the rating. That’s what I was talking about on previous slide where people have the opportunity to give their experiences. Embry Riddle has 13,000 GI Bill students and high ratings. That would tell me they know how to navigate the system. I like that – for me, that’s good information. What does the Compare do if I click on Compare?
* Jen: 2? (not sure if he would have clicked search without prompt)
* User: not asked

**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?
* 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?
* If I was not eligible for my full GI bill benefits, depending where I’m at financially, that could mean getting a loan of some kind. There again, that’s something that the university would help me figure out and not the responsibility of the website to do that for me.   
  - If not, how would they go about determining what benefits they would receive?
* How do you think the school search results were sorted?
  + No, that’s a good question and I didn’t….it looks like everyone has the same student load and ratings. That would be an interesting comparison – switch up the number of GI Bill students and make them higher or lower based on that comparison. Yeah, I don’t know. Maybe the other feedback point, if I was concerned whether or not the school was nationally or regionally accredited. Just based on the prototype, I can’t tell how they are organized. It’s not alphabetical or any preference given from the system to any of these universities, which I think is good from the part of the VA. I don’t know if that’s useful or if it was just meandering.
* Was there any other information you were expecting to see?

**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?
* Umm…doesn’t look like I can scroll…doesn’t look like I can scroll over. I was going to see if I could scroll over with the tabs. Maybe in this “Looking for” box…maybe if the search engine is strong enough that I can look up the majors. Or maybe it’s area of interest or something. That’s how I would initially look at it. It’s not intuitive to me. It says name of institution so I assume I’m only looking for a specific college and not a degree program.
* Amy prompted – refine search
* Benefit…Institution Preferences…search a major…so if there’s a way to add that to the previous page…or however the program works…that’s a separate box and include it on the page prior and look by school or degree program and a geographical location. I think those are the 3 main buckets that people would use. Clicked major (not level of degree). Scrolled down…okay, so we’re..yeah. Unviersity of Massachusetts alright. My assumption is that it’s a specialized degree and that’s why there are so few schools. No feedback on that app, but that’s what I’m thinking.
* Jen: .5 (Amy had to prompt for Refine search)

*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?

I would go to View details to see more. I like the ratings so I can get the experiences of other Veterans. Yeah so right here where it says single point of contact “Yes” I appreciate that…I assume if I click on that, it’s going to take me to that office and it’ll have a phone number or email address I can look at. This is kind of nice (school locations) – gives housing for on and off. Cautionary information…okay this is the warnings. But to your original question how would I find someone, I have to scroll down quite a bit to see if there’s a military single point of contact…possibly scrolled past it…here we go, single point of contact for Veterans, Yes. It’s kind of varied and doesn’t stand out among other hyperlinks. It’s not easy for me if I’m quickly looking through. If I’m looking for someone at the university…maybe near the website at the top have the POC at the top. That there is a single point of Veterans and a link to get there. I really have to be paying attention…and I would assume that’s the Veteran service office.

Jen’s note: He never got to contact details

Any important info you aren’t seeing? Being personal about it…I want to make sure I’m not coming up. Is there anything out of pocket? I see estimated benefits, what I’m getting. But it doesn’t say what cost per tuition hour is. Maybe that’s information that’s good to have on here for anyone looking to sign up here. Hey this is 100% covered by my benefits or not. Oh here we go…School costs and calendar…if I clicked on that, it would probably tell me. Tuition costs per credit hour. This would probably be on the university. I would probably just do it on my own and not something the department of Veterans Affairs has to have on their website.

*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?

Now that you mention it, the Compare button makes a lot of sense and doing mental calculations. I would click the Compare box and I could compare these two here. I guess I click on the Compare box here and Compare schools. Unchecked Indiana in tray. Selected both and clicked Compare schools. Hmmm…(scrolling through page)…went tto next school and scrolled through. So this is the stuff that popped on the page – the Yes and No on Veteran programs. Would this show up side-by-side on a laptop so I could do a better comparison? I like that I can see the benefits between each one so it’s not clear to me which one is better than the other. I see more green here, but it’s not immediate when I go back. A side by side on a single page would be better for me and maybe I could get that on a computer. I don’t know how you can get that on mobile, but I figure the people at Booz Allen Hamilton could figure it out. It’s not really showing me the difference between the two. It’s a breakout box of some kind with the two universities listed with all the Yes and Nos side by side, but something located on the same page. Unless I’m taking notes or making screen grabs, it’s not that helpful in the current state in helping me determine which school is better to go to than the other.

Note: Compare tray was having same visual issues that Amy had on hers (where Compare open/close was cut off)

Jen: 1.5

*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?

Maybe a button at the bottom that says back to results. I would go back and I would go back until I got to the previous screen until I go back

How many schools to compare at a single time? Me personally, maybe 3. 4 at most. At that point, you lose the point of it. I don’t know what the advantage is there. Anything more than 3 or 4 is overwhelming.

First task – you asked about Compare button – what did you expect it would do? It wasn’t intuitive to me that it was a way for me to compare schools until you told me to. I didn’t know initially what am I comparing this to. Oh you can compare by clicking multiple comparison boxes. Expand on the verbiage – compare search results, compare universities.

**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?