Participant: *Amanda*  
Date: 11/04/2020 @ 2:!5

**School Ratings Discussion Guide**

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

**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 would be looking at the Comparison Tool and talking about ratings and what information is helpful for Veterans when determining if a particular school is a good fit for them.  
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 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 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 (Optional) - 5 minutes**

Let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

* Are you currently using or have you ever used your education benefits?  
  *No, not yet.*
  + 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?  
  *Yes*
  + Which benefit?  
    *Post 9-11 GI Bill*.
  + Where are you in the school selection process?  
    *I was looking last year or a year and a half ago and I didn’t end up selecting a school and then when I wanted to the corona virus happened and uh I wanted to go in person and with the corona virus that’s not an option so im hoping to start next fall if things open back up..*
* What was most important to you when you were looking for potential schools?  
  *Accreditation, cost, and how much gi bill would cover… and then obviously curriculum but accreditation and cost are my top two priorities.*
* Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before?
  + If yes, what did you use it for?

\*\*As a disclaimer, we will be looking at ratings data for several schools. This data is fabricated and does not represent the actual thoughts or experiences of Veterans. \*\*

**First Task: Feedback on School Cards - 5 minutes**

Let's say you've done your research and you're interested in attending **Dartmouth**. How would you go about finding **Dartmouth** on the Comparison Tool? When you find what you're looking for, you can say "I found it".

Things to watch for:

* Does the user notice the ratings on the school cards?  
  skips over school cards and clicks into college.   
  *looks olike there is a sub school but they are the same town so im just going to click on the one that’s more general… so is this the new rating system here? Uh I think its pretty nicve.. I think currently it tells the satisfaction uh cautionary information but um it showed how mayn students were there and the number of complaints but this is the new part I guess…  
    
  seeing ratiings at the top by the school name… that’s pretty clutch. We typically have to go through the schools veterans department and   
    
  are people allowed to comment when they did reviews?  
    
  It would be nice if it was like google maps ratings if they had more details of what they liked or didn’t like.   
    
  Gi bill stupport is #1 in importance for me, then Overall expirence, then quality of classes and online instruction… job preparation is difficult to tlak on because not every college program is going to prepare you for the exact program you might want. – Hey Amanada, You mentioned that the job preparation rating is difficult to talk on because not every college program is going to prepare you for the exact program you might want - can you elaborate on this? – is there something you would like to see here? – so when they tlak about this is it about job fairs or classes that prepare you for the job.*
* *True to expectations means what is advertised is what is actually being executed.   
    
  I would be concerned about the online instruction for this one but If i was taking in person.i mean it has a 4.9 so that wouldn’t matter too much to me.   
    
  what is the difference between quality of classes and online instruction like is that for inperson? What went wrong there? Why don’t those match? If quality of classes are great why is online instruction so poor? –* how would you find out the discrepancy between quality of classes and online instruction.  
    
  huh so it cant be anyone even someone who went halfway through the process and quit, I think that’s important
* How does veteran privacy strike you?  
  *… im not sure how that’s private if the VA is giving the names of the specific students… Thinks the VA would send my name but not what rating they provided?   
    
  okay so the 4.2 looks like an averate of all the ratings?   
    
  so it says all classes for quality of classes and then online instruction is significantly lower so wouldn’t quality of classes be significantly lower so is that included or is that only for in person classes.*
* *How much is bsed on money and how much on ratings?  
  60% on cost and 40% on ratings*

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?
* What do you think of school card?
* What do you think of the ratings that you see?

Research questions:

* What do users think of the new school card layout?
* Are users interested in sorting or filtering search results by star ratings?
* What do users think of the ratings?

**Second Task: Initial Look at Ratings - 15 minutes**

Since you've found the school, how would you go about determining if **University of California-San Francisco** would be a good fit for you?  
 *Where is Stanford? California right? So I would usually take a screenshot of this search view and then go to Stanford… um and then.. I forget hjow do I pull two up?  
  
I would like to search multiple and add it to my que or something… I think im missing something.  
  
I would want to compare prices and what not… how much I would need to pay out of pocket… looks like in this case they pay the total or no out of pocket costs huh… but then I would move there right? So out of pocket costs wouldn’t quite matter… because I think its an out of pocket cost for bothso Stanford is 22 out of pocket and dartmouth is 25…huh so I would have to cover this tuition cost correct? Not mom and dad I guess… I mean the difference is $3,000 I guess it would then just depend on where I would want to move. Uh Stanford pays so much more housing but of course its more expensive to live in California… maybe it offset this cost I would rent a room and use some of the housing allowance to cover some of that out of pocket cost. Seems like both schools have really good ratings and no complaints.   
  
2.5 – 3 would be my breaking point for GI Bill support ratings you don’t want that stress…  
  
since the schools are kinda toe to toe it would mater more about the costs.   
  
I would say the ratings are 99.9% trustful because vets don’t care if they hurt peoples feelings.   
  
a regular students experience can be completely different then a veterans experience. Most of the time they are going back to school they aren’t in the same age bracket and they are usually using the GI Bill and its not a seamless process it requires more work on your end. A friendly veterans department is great and having people to vouch this is a good school for vetereans is pretty important.   
  
would like to see something about the area the school is in – city or neighborhood- walkability, accessibility, parking, something like that.   
  
would like to see types of degrees offered at the school in the card view.*

Things to watch for:

* How does the participant open the school profile page (School name or View Details link)?

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?
* What do you think of the school now that you've seen the ratings?
* What do you think of the categories?
  + What do you think "True to expectations" means?
  + Some categories say that a certain number of individuals did not rate, what do you think of that?
* Where do you think the ratings come from?
* Do you have any questions about the ratings?

Research questions:

* What do users think of the star ratings?
* How does the overall rating weigh into the user’s perception of the school?
* How do the individual ratings weigh into the user’s perception of the school?
* Do users understand the “Not yet rated” indicators?
* Do users think the “Not yet rated” scores affect the overall score?
* What do users believe “True to expectations” means?
* What do users think of the “About Ratings” content?
* Are there any aspects of the ratings design that users find confusing?
* Do users think the ratings are useful?

**Third Task - Comparing Prestigious Schools - 15 minutes**

Let's say you are considering attending either **Stanford University** or **Dartmouth College**. Both schools have the program you're interested in and you plan on moving to an apartment close to the school you attend. Walk me through how you'd use the Comparison Tool to help you decide which school you'd attend.

Things to watch for:

* How does the user compare schools (look at them one at a time, open multiple tabs, etc.)?

Upon completion of task:

* How did you think that went?
* What do you think of the schools now that you've seen the ratings?
* Which school would be a better fit? Why?

Research questions:

* Are users interested in the different rating categories or just the overall score?
* Which categories are valuable to users? Are there any categories that aren't valuable? Are there any additional categories they would like to see?
* What do users think the different categories mean?
* How do users think the rating scores are determined (average of submitted scores, calculated value, etc.)?
* How trustworthy are the ratings?
* How do users think ratings are collected?
* What level of privacy do users expect if they would provide a rating?
* Do users think the ratings are useful?

**Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes**

* Do you have general thoughts or feedback on the Comparison Tool that you’d like to share?
* Any questions for me?
* I want to give a chance for the other people on the line to ask a question.

**Thank-You and Closing - 3 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, thanks so much and enjoy the rest of your day!