**Search and Filtering Usability Testing Discussion Guide**

**P4 – Corey Speight**

**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 take a look at the GI Bill Comparison Tool. Specifically, we're looking at how to calculate your GI Bill benefits for institutions and programs within the Comparison Tool.

Before we get started, a few things I want to mention:

* This entire session should take about 30 minutes. I don't want to keep you much longer than that, so I may occasionally prompt you with the next question or topic.
* During this session, we want to hear your honest opinions. We're not testing your ability. We just want to improve these tools to better meet Veteran's needs. I won't be offended by any opinions you express and 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 the screen and audio as we talk today? We use the recordings to confirm that we have captured your opinions accurately. The recordings are deleted after we finish analysis, and none of your comments will be attributed to you directly.

* If yes: Great - thank you. Once I start recording, I'll ask again so we have your audible confirmation.
* If no: Ok. My team will just observe and take notes as we go.

Start recording.

* I have started recording. I'd like to confirm: Are you comfortable if I record my screen the audio as we talk today?

**Mobile**

iOS Screen Sharing: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005890803-iOS-Screen-Sharing>

Link 2: <https://it.umn.edu/services-technologies/how-tos/zoom-share-computer-sound-during-screen#Sharing-iOS-Zoom-App>

**Warm-up Questions - 5 minutes**

Before we look at the website, let’s start with a few warm-up questions.

1. Are you currently using or planning to use your GI Bill education benefits in the next few months? Currently using – started school in May. University of Maryland – College Park.

* Currently using: When did you start school? Where are you going to school?
* Planning to use: Are you looking at any particular schools?

1. Have you ever used the GI Bill Comparison Tool before? Yeah, I used it in my search back in February.

* If yes, fantastic!
  + When do you think the last time you used it was?
* If no, no worries. We're checking that out today and always appreciate getting a fresh perspective on it.

For our session today, I'm going to give you a couple tasks to do online. While you're going through them, it would be really helpful if you'd think aloud - kind of like you'd do if you were talking to yourself. We are interested in your first reactions, what you're thinking & wondering as you go through the process. The more you say about what you are thinking and wondering, the more we’ll learn.

When you think aloud, it helps us understand what works well and where we might want to make improvements to make things even easier. If you have questions, it’s likely that many other Veterans will, as well, so feel free to ask them along the way.

I'm going to give you control of my screen & mouse. I'll pass control to you and you should receive a message that prompts you to control the screen.

**Option 2**

**First Task: Finding a School and Filtering - 10 minutes (Production)**

**Part 1**

Let's go back and time and pretend that you are considering attending **Participant-Named University** and are curious if the Comparison Tool has information on that school. How would you find out what information the Comparison Tool has on that school?

I was looking at George Mason, George Washington University….Georgetown

I was National Guard Reserves. I would need Post 9/11 compared to others. I know I’m at 70% based on eligibility. Institution schools…how do you want to take classes…change to inperson and online.. School, I would just type in georgetown and just click on Georgetown University. The first one is I wanted to pick. Click on it to see if there’s anything else I need to do. Military details did not stay the same…just changing that in case it changed anything. Clicked Update benefits. Nothing happened there. I don’t know if that’s a glitch. Yeah, nothing’s happening. I’d use this to see how much the school cost, housing, stipend. I’m just trying to figure out if that $15000 is paid to me…why is it paying me 15thousand instead of 70%.

Prompted to go back

It was super easy – typed in Georgetown and it brought up several options. I’m just focusing on the one I wanted to look at. I’m not sure if I need to look at programs within the school. I’m not sure if that matters at this level of searching. Right now, I’m just interested in looking at Georgetown University. And all the info will be the same for each one

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The only one that seems to stick out to me is Yellow Ribbon. I’m not sure what the others one are or how they apply to this. I don’t understand what the filter is for…what its going to filter out at this point. If I was to click on Yellow Ribbon…nothing changes so it says that Yellow ribbon benefits apply to these schools? What do those filters do…what are they? I am a Veteran and I don’t know which of those apply to me? I know I apply for Yellow Ribbon but I don’t know how to do it in the search.

Things to watch for:

* Does the user use the autocomplete functionality or search?
* How many times does the user adjust their search criteria before they get what they want?
* How does the user change their search?

**Part 2**

Upon additional research into said school, you decided that the school wasn't for you. However, you really like the area and are curious what other options are available to you. How would you go about identifying other schools in that area?

Well one…I would change the schools…my first thing is to keep Georgetown there, but I don’t know where that button is. I would delete Georgetown..and now go to George Mason…and it populated the school I was looking for. The school I was looking for came up

It was simple. Easy. Just type in a name.

Things to watch for:

* How does the user change their search?
* Does the user change the filters?
  + If yes, which ones?
* How many times does the user adjust their search criteria before they get what they want?
* Does the user open the additional information components? If yes, which ones?

Upon completion of the task:

* How did you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?
* What did you think of the filters? Which ones would be most useful to you?

**Part 3**

Have you ever considered going to a school that was gender-exclusive, had a religious affiliation or special mission (like Historically Black colleges)?

Yes – I was looking at Howard University which is in the area. Typed in Howa..and clicked Howard University. It popped up – with a warning.

It was simple. It was easy. Typed Moreh…and clicked Morehouse College. Searching schools is pretty stress-free.

* If yes, have you ever conducted a search for those? What did you do?
* If not, how would you go about searching for schools like that?

Things to watch for:

* Does the user look for any filter options to help them with these?

**Switch environments**

**Second Task: Acronym School and Filtering - 10 minutes (Staging)**

**Part 1**

Let's say you've heard good things about the programs at MIT, otherwise known as Massachusetts Institute of Technology. How would you go about finding that school on the Comparison Tool?

I would just type in mit and see if it comes up….and it doesn’t. then I would go back and be more specifi…Typed Massa, clicked it and it came up.

I guess on a scale of 1 to 5 that would be a 4. That common name for it wasn’t an option.

Another one I would look at is Famu…wasn’t going to click anything because wasn’t in autocomplete…Amy prompted to hit enter and it appeared.

Typed mit…it didn’t work for mit. Typed Massa…and reselected option.

Things to watch for:

* Does the user use any filters or change their search criteria?
* What, if any, filters do they use?
* Did the user input the acronym for MIT? If so, how did they react to the results?
* How many times does the user adjust their search criteria before they get what they want?

**Part 2**

You like MIT, but have some concerns over expenses. You would like to broaden your search to any schools in Massachusetts that are Public Institutions and have the Yellow Ribbon program. How would you go about doing this?

Clicked Massachusetts in State and clicked Yellow Ribbon and deleted search. As far as Public Universities…I don’t see a Public or Private option..oh, there we go (Institution Categories). I would use filters on the left

I would say it was a 5.

Things to watch for:

* Does the user use any filters or change their search criteria?
* What, if any, filters do they use?
* How many times does the user adjust their search criteria before they get what they want?

**Upon completion of task:**

* How did you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**Part 3**

Let's say you've recently moved to the upper east side of Manhattan in New York City. You don't have a car and would like to either bike or walk to school if possible. How would you find out what schools are in your area?

Changed state to All. I would type New York or maybe be more specific. Typed Manhattan in search results and changed State to New York. Unchecked Yellow Ribbon. That would be how I would start that search. Just looking at that information, I don’t know if that info is official since the bottom 2 don’t have GI Bill students...so I’d take out Manhattan and see results…since there’s no other way I’d scroll through results.

I would then go to Google. I’d ask what colleges or universities are in Manhattan and I would come back here and type it in. I think Google would give me different options – sometimes it’s very specific and sometimes its not. \*Type it in and see what Google gives you\*

That probably wasn’t….you have to use other tools. You have to get the information somewhere else. So as far as that search, I didn’t have that information and it made the search harder. I don’t know if I should be upset with the tool or myself for that. I’d give it a 3 because I would have to go somewhere else.

From this page – I couldn’t change to online only. I’d go back

Used tool before - How did you search for current school?

That experience would be a 2 because I can change all the other details here…

Other filters? The only other thing I can think of is schools were categorized by size…like population. Maybe a school with less than 500 students or 500-1000 students. Another feature would be based on my degree. Another one would be searching through accreditations. Or a school that is accredited by different institutions. Or even if I wanted to look for a community college.

Used Comparison Tool – George Mason and Georgetown and George Washington. Seeing difference in these schools. See if they had a Veteran department. Had everything except how the schools were ranked – that was the only research he had to do outside the comparison tool.

*Prompt after user tells what they would do* Let's say your ZIP code is 10021. Would that help your search?

Things to watch for:

* Does the user use any filters or change their search criteria?
* What, if any, filters do they use?
* How many times does the user adjust their search criteria before they get what they want?
* Does the user try the zip code after being prompted?

**Upon completion of task:**

* How did you think that went?
* On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**Post-Task Interview - 5 minutes**

Those are all the tasks I have for you today.

* 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 chanced to 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!