**STEM Usability Testing Discussion Guide - Round 2**

**P2 – Barry Paxton**

**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 application for a new scholarship for Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries.

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.

We will be working in a prototype so some functionality will not work as expected. For example, when you click on a field, an answer or selection may pre-populate or alternatively, you may click on something and nothing may happen. In those cases, I'll let you know that the functionality isn't working and ask what you would expect to happen.

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?

**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 have you ever used your VA education benefits? Yes
   * Which benefit? Voc Rehab, I’ve used several of them. I can’t remember all the names of them.
2. Do you know roughly how much of your education entitlement you have left? I think I’ve got right at about 9 months. I should have enough maybe, unless I do extended studies…to get me where I need to do. What this virus is doing to schools is killing us. I think it’s my GI…Voc Rehab is just doing a particular…and I’m running out of the remaining. I think it’s Yellow Ribbon. I’m studying to be a paralegal. Every time I turn the corner, it’s not easy. Not easy at all.
3. Are you familiar with the Rogers STEM scholarship? I’ve heard of that, but I hadn’t really gotten into a lot of the details of it. Ever since the coronavirus, everything just fell off. It’s like we’re in No Man’s Land. I remember something along the line of I want to say it was something about technology…lord, don’t quote me on that. It caught my attention on a few things on something that they’re willing to pay something of your education if you’re in a certain field that’s in high demand or something.
4. I wonder why the college VA reps didn’t say anything about this. Is it new? We contact the college VA reps to get some direction.

* If yes, what have you heard about it?
* If no, as a quick summary of the scholarship, the Rogers STEM Scholarship provides up to nine months of additional Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits (to a maximum of $30,000) to qualifying Veterans/Fry Scholars seeking an undergraduate STEM degree or who have earned a STEM degree and are seeking a teaching certification.

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.

Note: Each participant will go through ONE of the tasks below.

**Task 1: Authenticated User with Too Much Entitlement - 15 minutes**

We're going to do some role playing. Let's say you're Sammy Smith and you're using the **Post 9/11 GI Bill** to obtain an undergraduate degree in **Chemistry** from **Chicago State University**. How would you go about filling out this application? You will log in as an authenticated user.

*When eligibility warning alert on intro page appears*

* What did you think of the eligibility alert message you saw?
  + Where do you think the information is coming from?
  + Do you think this information is accurate?
  + Would you still apply?

*When school information appears*

* What did you think of the pre-population of school information? What would you do if the information wasn't right?

Things to watch for:

* Does the user read the subway map?
* Does the user experience any confusion in determining how to start the application? (Need to scroll to bottom of page)
* How does the user react to the eligibility alert message (entitlement)?

**Upon completion of task**

* In your personal field of study, would you expect to be eligible for this scholarship?
* In terms of applying for this scholarship, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**Task 2: Unauthenticated User that is Not Chapter 33 - 15 minutes**

We're going to do some role playing. Let's say you're Jamie Lee and you're using the **Montgomery GI Bill** to obtain an undergraduate degree in **Chemistry** from **Chicago State University**. You don't currently have an account and aren't interested in creating one. How would you go about filling out this application?

Well the first thing I would do, is I would go to one of the reps and get help with the claim. I guess I scrolled down to far…#2 Prepare. If I need help filling out application, School Certifying Official….that doesn’t sound right. The VSO isn’t going to know anything about this. They deal with other things. They need to kind of reword that. School Certifying Official…that’s too vague. It needs to say see your local ?

Do you think on #2 you have the info to complete application?

* + I don’t know why they would need bank account information. That would set an alarm off when VA should already have it. Information about your school – it sounds like to me that its kind of misleading. If you’re going to use your VA rep at the school they should be able to do that for us. Because then you have to worry about giving them the wrong information. It puts more pressure on the reps, but in my opinion that’s what they’re there for. If I want to go to the doctor to fix a stomach doctor, I don’t go to a bone doctor. Running to a VSO…you’re not going to get help with that. If it’s claims, then yes. But they aren’t going to be able to help with education benefits.
  + If I didn’t have a VA rep at the university. I think it restricts us if we’re not VA literate. It would be nice to have a phone number….I need to fill out this application. Can you mail me an application? I’m not very compatible with a computer…that there needs to be done.
  + From my experience with VA reps, they’ll say hey it’ll take you about 20 minutes to fill it out and we’ll go through it together. And it makes life so much easier for us. If we do it on your own, it ain’t going to work. I hate to say that, but I see it all the time.
  + I think the Start your application without signing in…it needs to come up to where it says Apply instead of way down here in the green. If it’s like right there, it would be a lot better for Veterans. A lot of them aren’t going to go to the bottom. Of the screen. They’ll see Apply and it’s blank. So me, I would give up. I wouldn’t even do it. You can call it lazy, but that’s the military way. You follow direction.
  + Once I figure out once I found it, I’d call them and ask them if they can mail it. Right here underneath the Sign in or create an account. That’s a bad spot. Maybe it’s the military way…but I’ve done everything in Step one and move on. If it was up there with Apply up there with 3, click there and everything would be going.
  + Fill out SSN and go to the next page. And then they’re going to know…the guidance and counselors, they’ll know all that. At least mine does.
  + See this is why it pays to have the rep, because the rep knows that. I’m sorry for your luck, but you don’t apply so let’s see what else we can do for you. If I was by myself, I’d say screw it and just quit right then and there. At this point, it’s going to continue giving me a hard time so why fool with it? I’m focused on getting through school and I don’t know everything in the wide world, that’s why they have the reps. I would just hit No. And then Exit application, but if my rep was with me, I don’t even think we’d been here. As individuals, we have no clue. I don’t know where the exit button would take me. Probably the trash can. When you’re dealing with the VA, lord knows what it’s going to do. If you don’t have a school rep and trying to do something, you’re just shooting yourself in the foot.
  + My opinion is that you’ve got to go to these representation people and you’ve got to find a good one and you have to find one that is going to work for you. Websites will give you a ballpark idea. But an individual can do more because they know the ins and outs.
  + Good rep – stays there for the Veterans and aren’t gone after a couple days. They need to understand military life and military way. It’s hard to understand some of these guys because they don’t know what they went through. We had someone who wasn’t a Veteran and they bailed out. Now they have someone who is a Veteran and they tell us if we have a problem to let them know. They ask about our well-being and our education benefits
  + Usually with paper they’ll say to fill out the highlighted fields and send back

*When eligibility alert appears*

* What did you think of the eligibility alert message you saw? Would you still apply?

*When 2nd (STEM) eligibility summary page appears*

* What are your thoughts on seeing this information again?
* What would you do at this point?

Things to watch for:

* Does the user read the subway map?
* Does the user experience any confusion in determining how to start the application? (Need to scroll to bottom of page)
* How does the user react to the eligibility alert message (wrong benefit)?
* How does the user react to the 2nd ineligibility alert message?

**Upon completion of task**

* In your personal field of study, would you expect to be eligible for this scholarship?
* In terms of applying for this scholarship, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very hard and 5 is very easy, how would you rate this task?

**TASK 3: Authenticated User in non-STEM program - 15 minutes**

We're going to do some role playing. Let's say you're Jordan Johnson and you're using the **Post 9/11 GI Bill** to obtain an undergraduate degree in **Philosophy** from **Chicago State University**. How would you go about filling out this application? You will log in as an authenticated user.

*When eligibility alert appears*

* What did you think of the eligibility alert message you saw? Would you still apply?

Things to watch for:

* + Does the user read the subway map?
  + Does the user experience any confusion in determining how to start the application? (Need to scroll to bottom of page)
  + Does the user check the Approved STEM programs document?
  + How does the user react to ineligibility alert?
  + If they click "Check remaining benefits", what would you expect to happen (e.g. modal, new page, etc.)?

**Upon completion of task:**

* In your personal field of study, would you expect to be eligible for this scholarship?
* In terms of applying for this scholarship, 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 - 10 minutes**

Circle back on

* School contact details - Is your school ID the same as your SSN? If applicable, what would you put down for your school email?

Those are all the tasks I have for you today.

* Do you have general thoughts or feedback on the application 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!