Yes, I've wanted to do this before. I suppose the reason execute() is not allowed is to prevent you from writing a wrapper of IDL interpreter for the VM. If this is so, perhaps it could be possible for Exelis to provide a reduced version of execute which would simply evaluate an arithmetic expression. For my purposes - and yours, too, it appears - it would be enough if only +-*/^ were allowed (although probably sqrt, alog10, exp, sin... and a bunch of other built-in fns could sensibly be included, too): I don't think you could build anything interpreter-like from those. A user-defined function is a useful thing to have in a scientific data analysis language...

Greg