



Question: Does the tool allow you to save different clients under your login and can you recall each client at a later time?

Answer: The Coach allows you to create and save multiple evaluations under an individual login. These evaluations can include as many or as few clients, students with disabilities, school districts as you want but each of these individuals or groups must be identified as being part of the “treatment group” or “comparison group”.

Question: Realizing it is a weaker design, does it provide support for one group design?

Answer: No, the Coach does not provide support for one group design. It requires use of two groups. Note that as long as all your clients did not participate in a program, it is always possible to create that second group of comparison clients.

Question: Please describe how the information that is uploaded is secure? Do agencies need to deidentify information before uploading?

Answer: The data security is described in detail on this [Coach page](#). The website is hosted in Amazon’s AWS GovCloud (US). More information about this environment can be found on their website. We have implemented measures designed to secure the information from accidental loss and from unauthorized access, use, alteration, and disclosure. We carefully selected our hosting provider, which implements network-level security measures in accordance with industry best practice standards, including appropriate administrative, physical, and technical safeguards to secure information.

Question: Does the tool allow you to compare the effectiveness of the same service being provided by different vendors?

Answer: Yes, you could use the Coach to compare the effectiveness of one vendor compared to another.

Question: How are assumptions of the regression tested by the tool? Ex: How do you test for non-normality and if found, how is it corrected?

Answer: The Coach does not test assumptions of normality nor does it make corrections for it.

Question: This kind of tool seems best designed for those with a sizable number of participants. Many Tribal VR programs have too few participants to make the analysis worthwhile. I’m wondering if there’s a way for multiple Tribal VR programs to participate collectively so that there is a higher number of participants? Your comments?

Answer: There is no minimum sample size requirement. However, the larger the sample, the more confident you can be that a finding of a sizeable outcome is due to the program you are evaluating. It would also be possible to test programs for multiple Tribal VR programs together. You would have to combine data into one file before uploading it to the Coach for analysis.

Question: Will you discuss how to prepare and upload the 9 data into the coach?

Answer: This [user guide](#) describes how to prepare your data.

Question: One of the big issues with using existing VR administrative data to construct valid comparison groups, especially for individuals who are only receiving pre-ETS, is that the available data on those who aren't VR program participants – including ANY data on their employment – aren't readily available (VR agencies are only required to collect and report employment information on individuals who apply and are determined eligible for VR). This could lead to programmatic decisions that appear to be “data based,” but are actually inappropriately influenced by significant limitations in the available data for analysis.

Answer: You are correct that an analysis of pre-ETS is limited by the fact that VR agencies are required to record very limited information on potentially eligible students who receive pre-ETS. However, agencies could examine the impact of specific pre-ETS services or providers among clients. Agencies with data linkages with schools could also look at outcomes for potentially eligible students.

Question: This presentation makes it sound like any VR program manager could use this tool... but wouldn't they need to have a fairly high level of knowledge of how to construct the necessary data sets, as well as knowledge of both research design methodology (e.g., using comparison groups, identifying appropriate control variables, how to deal with missing or incomplete data) and the limitations on various types of statistical analyses (regression analysis, in this example)?

Answer: We designed the Coach to put tools for rigorous evaluation in the hands of VR staff who may not have experience with or access to statistical software that is traditionally used for evaluations. While some background in evaluation is helpful, the Coach includes a number of short reference guides on evaluation, evidence and data, along with pointers along the way to help users. A useful starting point is this [“getting started” guide](#).

Question: Is there an upper limit on the number of VR cases I can include in an analysis?

Answer: No, there is not an upper limit on the number of cases you can include in an analysis.

Question: How does the Coach address sample size?

Answer: As with any evaluation, sample size affects the statistical power of the tests to find an impact of the program on the outcome of interest. The larger the sample, the more confident you can be that, if needed, the program you are evaluating is having the intended impact, that the Coach will be able to detect it.

Question: Can I run analysis on specific geographic areas in my state?

Answer: Yes, you can run analyses on specific geographic areas, or comparing two geographic areas.

Question: Can we see an example of what your file looked like that was uploaded?

Answer: You can see an example of a data file that is ready for the Coach in the file [“VR Program Evaluation Coach Sample Data.”](#)

Question: Do you provide guidance for ensuring that the data needed to create comparison groups does not accidentally identify individuals (e.g., due to group size and specific characteristics)?

Answer: The dashboards and tools include tips along the way reminding users not to upload personally identifiable information. The briefs, analyses, and reports produced while the user is using the Coach include only aggregated, non-identifiable data.

Question: What happens to the data after the report is completed?

Answer: When users upload data they are uploaded only in a temporary cache. The data are used only to produce the analysis or report that the user requested. Once that analysis is complete, the data files are permanently erased from the temporary cache.

Question: On the multiple vendor idea, a person could have multiple studies of vendor vs. no vendor. So you'd have 10 studies to "compare" the 10 vendors.

Answer: Yes, a user wanting to compare outcomes of 10 vendors would need to set up multiple studies comparing one vendor to another.

Question: Is there any oversight that may occur based on the results of an evaluation? For example, the success (or lack thereof) specific service, etc.

Answer: The Coach does not provide oversight on actions an agency may take as a result of evaluation findings. We at Mathematica Policy Research are available to discuss the implications of your evaluation findings however.

Question: DE VR wrote Pre-ETS contracts to measure skills gain in the 5 core areas through pre and post test data. We did not compare it to another group who were not served. Our knowledge of eligible students age 14 – 21 enrolled in school with a documented disability equal to 6300 according to DOE. Is that comparison sufficient to use as a comparison group to test skills gain and other outcomes.

Answer: It sounds like you are collecting excellent pre- and post- data on skill gains. I would be happy to talk to you further to learn more about the implementation of pre-ETS and to figure out whether and how the Coach could help you take this data to generate rigorous estimates of the impact of pre-ETS.

Question: We have had a summer program that is getting ready to go into the 4th year. There were about 20 participants each year. The target population was limited to one type of disability in the 1st two years but we changed the target population to include multiple disability types in years 3 & 4. Could the coach help us identify the impact of this change on a specific measure (e.g., satisfaction)?

Answer: Yes, the Coach could help you estimate the impact of the summer program – in either or both the first two years or subsequent years on outcomes of participants compared to similar non-participants.

Question: Given that the analysis results make probabilistic statements, I'm wondering if the statistical tests used by the Coach follow a frequentist or Bayesian paradigm.

Answer: The statistical tests follow a Bayesian approach. However, the technical appendix also provides results using a frequentist framework.

