WISC-III Decision Tree

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1 Score all subtest items and calculate the raw scores
2 Determine the standard scores for all subtests (1-19)
3 Calculate the (full) scale and factor IQ’s, including the 95% confidence intervals
4 Harmonic profile at the scale level (no significant VIQ-PIQ discrepancy)? See Table B in the WISC-III Manual
5 FSIQ is an adequate measure for general cognitive functioning, FSIQ can be interpreted (more roughly when scale IQ’s are internally inconsistent)
6 Are both scales internally consistent?
7 Yes
8 Describe analysis at the factor level (VC-PO-PS)
9 No
10 Harmonic factor IQ profile (no significant factor IQ differences VC-PO, VC-PS or PO-PS)? See Table B in the WISC-III Manual
11 Yes
12 Interpretation at the scale level (VIQ-PIQ). Factor IQ differentiation is of little additional value
13 No
14 Preferably analysis at the factor level, as relevant capacity differences might be masked at the scale level (if ‘No’, analysis at the factor level instead, does not provide additional relevant information)
15 Regardless of the individual profile, check the lowest and highest subtests and consider what they might have in common (always keep a clinical perspective!)
16 Interpretation of the internally consistent factor as a whole
17 Subtest analysis within this factor (generating hypotheses)

1 This Decision tree is part of the hierarchical method of analysis. Articles describing this method of analysis and other relevant files can be downloaded for free at www.apollopraktijk.nl.
2 When the analysis is performed at the factor level, it is useful to examine the VIQ-PIQ discrepancy in order to establish whether the Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) may be interpreted (the FSIQ is a product of the ten VIQ-PIQ subtests; not all FSIQ subtests are included in a factor (e.g. Arithmetic) and the Processing Speed factor contains subtest Symbol Search does not contribute to the FSIQ).
3 If both scales and all factors are internally consistent, both levels of analysis are legitimate. Choose the scale level unless the factor level has additional value. A VC-PO-PS profile, for example, adds clinical value to VIQ>PIQ, whereas a significant VC-PS difference is of little clinical significance (like comparing apples and oranges), compared to the potential relevance of a PO-PS difference.
4 When choosing the level of analysis, the most important criterion is which level of analysis covers the individual profile content best and provides the most useful clinical information. When only one scale (50%) but two factors (67%) are internally inconsistent, this may be a reason to stay at the scale level to perform your analysis, because it is 'less bad' than what you find at the factor level.
5 'Disharmonic factor IQ profile' refers to at least one factor differing significantly from another factor (regardless which one). 'Harmonic scale IQ profile' means the VIQ
6 PIQ discrepancy in order to establish whether the FSIQ is a product of the ten VIQ-PIQ differences is a less adequate measure for general cognitive functioning  interpretation with caution/restraint
7 Description/analysis at the factor level
8 Interpretation of the internally consistent factor as a whole
9 Subtest analysis within this factor (generating hypotheses)