Symbol Digit Task

Instructions:

1. **Boxes filled correctly.** Ask about the subject’s handedness before starting the task. If the subject is left-handed, or uses an inverted writing posture, use a separate ‘Key’. Introduce the test by saying: “Next, here is what I would like you to do. Look at the boxes at the top of the page. Below each symbol (point), there is a number—1 to 9. Down here (point to practice items), the boxes beneath each symbol are empty. What I would like you to do is to fill in each box with the appropriate number, according to this key (point). So, the first box should have a ‘1’, the second box should have a ‘5’, the third box should have a ‘2’ and so on. Just for practice, I would like you to fill in the next few boxes, up to double line (point).”

Allow the subject to fill in the practice items. Correct any errors when the subject is finished. Then say, “Good. Now listen carefully. Here is what I would like you to do. As soon as I say ‘go’, I would like you to fill in these boxes (point), as quickly as you can. When you get to the end of the first line, go on to the second line. If you make a mistake, just write over it—do not bother to erase. Do not skip any boxes, and go as quickly as you can. Don’t worry about neatness. Ready? Go ahead.”

Begin timing. Stop the subject after 90 seconds. Timing is critical! [Mark ‘999’ if participant declines testing, a technical problem occurs or test is interrupted.]

2. **Paired-Recall.** After completion of the 90-second task, cover the page so that only the last line is visible. Ask the subject to fill in as many of the boxes as he can from memory. There is no time limit. The subject’s score on this part of the task is the total number of unique symbol-pairs recalled. There are 15 items, but 6 of these items are repetitions, so the maximum score is 9. Sometimes a subject will correctly code one symbol, but make an error on the second occurrence of the symbol—these trials are counted as being correct.
TRAIL-MAKING TASK

Instructions:

[PART A] Show the practice section for Part A to the subject and say, "I want you to connect the dots in sequence as fast as you can. Start here at number 1 and go from 1 to 2 to 3 and so on until you reach the end. You should connect the dots in one continuous movement without lifting your pencil from the paper. Work as fast as you can without making any mistakes. If you make a mistake, just trace back to where you made the error and try again. Ready, . . . go!"

After the subject completes the practice trial, move on to the full task and say, "I have some more of these. Again work as fast as you can. Ready, . . . go!" Begin timing.

If the subject makes any errors, quickly show him the mistake and have him continue. It is very important that you point out any errors as soon as possible.

If the subject becomes confused and cannot find a number because his hand is covering the correct answer, wait 10 seconds and then point out that he is covering the answer with his hand. The timing of your intervention is very important, so try to wait exactly 10 seconds before correcting the subject. This intervention is scored as a 'Prompt', not as an error.

Record the time the subject takes to complete the task, along with the total number of errors, and the total number of prompts. Subjects are allowed a maximum of 240 seconds (4 minutes) for this task. If the subject completes the task in less than 4 minutes, he gets a score of 25 points. Otherwise, count the number of dots connected within the 4-minute time limit. [Mark ‘99’ or ‘999’ if participant declines testing, a technical problem occurs or test is interrupted.]

[PART B] Show the practice section for Part B to the subject and say, "This time I want you to do something a little different. I want you to alternate numbers with letters of the alphabet. So for this example, you would go from 1 to A to 2 to B and so on. Do you understand? Again, I want you to work as fast as you can without making any mistakes. You should connect the dots in one continuous movement. Ready, . . . go!"

After the subject completes the practice trial, show him the full task and say, "I have some more of these. Again work as fast as you can. Ready, . . . go!" Begin timing.

The rules for timing, scoring and correcting errors are the same as for Part A of the Trail-Making Test.