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Visuospatial Skills and the Workforce: A Brief Review

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Abstract

Visuospatial cognitive skills are increasingly recognized as critical in many areas of both formal and informal learning, but far less research has looked at their role in the workforce. We know, for example, that strong visuospatial skills in high school are predictive of STEM occupations, but we know less about how these skills are actually deployed in the workplace, and also the extent to which these skills might also be important in various non-STEM occupational pathways. Our review provides current context for these questions, including identifying occupations for which these research questions are actively being explored, as well as areas that urgently call for more research. We argue that systematic and rigorous cognitive research should be used to inform evidence-based best practices for addressing the unique workforce-related challenges of the 21st century.