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Judith Rényi | December 15, 2014

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Skills work can help job seekers ace interview

At the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, we agree that 21st-century skills education for those in poverty is critical to their employability ("Census: Income gap is widening," Dec. 7). Gone are the well-paying jobs you could get without some college education. In Philadelphia, that has left hundreds of thousands unable to find a job, or having to work two and three jobs, but still subsisting below the poverty level.

That's why the commission created a citywide, technology-based system called myPLACE™ that can educate adults for 21st-century jobs on a large scale. In just a few months, myPLACE™ has served more than 3,500 job seekers, half of whom took our online course to learn computer, job searching, and career planning skills.

The commission has also developed myPLACE™ Online, the nation's first online, cohort-based courses for low-literacy adults in reading, writing, and math. Our adult learners have raised their math and reading levels by as much as one to three grade levels by taking just one six-week course.

The myPLACE™ system and online courses work, and they are cost-efficient and ready for expansion in Philadelphia and replication in other locales.

Wherever you see low median incomes, you will also find residents whose skills are too low to give them an entrée into the workforce. Adult education is the answer.

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