

## Solving the Education Gap for Adult Learners by Enabling Colleges and Universities to Provide Student-Driven, Flexible and Affordable Learning Experiences



**Jade Roth**  
CEO

**Flat World Education, Inc.**

**CEOCFO: Ms. Roth, would you tell us about Flat World Education?**

**Ms. Roth:** Flat World is a competency based education company. Our platform enables colleges and universities to deliver personalized adaptive learning experiences that are mobile and flexible. We deliver experiences that are designed to meet the needs of the millions of working adults and students who are seeking an education that fits their busy schedules and lives, experiences that enable adults to get degrees or certificates to advance their job opportunities, their careers and their lives in general.

**CEOCFO: There are many schools embracing adult education and doing it from different formats. Your site poses the question, "what if we started from scratch?" How has that made a difference at Flat World?**

**Ms. Roth:** Over fifty years ago US Higher Education faced unprecedented demand by students seeking post secondary degrees. Now, we know that every citizen should have access to some kind of post secondary educational opportunity in order to insure economic well-being and personal fulfillment. Traditional higher education was never designed to support the kind of programs that are needed for all learners, yet we continue to devote billions of dollars to colleges and universities offering instructional programs and teaching strategies appropriate for just a minority of students and disciplines. Online education was meant to be the perfect solution, but it mostly transferred old models from a physical classroom to a virtual space. And new technologies, like the LMS platforms that currently dominate the market, were patterned on old ideas of course management.

The good news is that online education refocused educators on the need to seriously consider how students learn, rather than just supporting individual instructor's teaching preferences. We have experienced a re-imagination of teaching and learning, often based on skill mastery and teaching practices long used by certain disciplines or colleges. This re-imagination must now be supported by new technology solutions, not by technology designed for traditional classroom use. These are the challenges and opportunities Flat World is solving.

**CEOCFO: What are you providing and to whom?**

**Ms. Roth:** We provide all the foundational elements for a comprehensive competency based education program. We have built a scalable SaaS technology platform that provides learners personalized and adaptive experiences, through which they can progress at their own speed. We provide services such as curriculum development, change management, and how to teach within a learner-driven environment. All of these services, products and technology are part of what Flat World offers colleges and universities today.

**CEOCFO: Are the people that should be aware of Flat World knowledge informed about you?**

**Ms. Roth:** Awareness is always a challenge, but our partners are the best voice for Flat World. We work with SUNY, Empire State, Laureate, Peirce, Brandman University AT Still and others. These diverse schools are all on the forefront of new learning modalities and student engagement. Their success and awareness is our success and awareness.

**CEOCFO: How do you go about developing courses?**

**Ms. Roth:** We have a technology platform that allows instructional designers, faculty and administrators to create content within our platform or simply import existing content into the platform. It is client facing and easy to use. We also have instructional designers who work closely with faculty on campuses to create curriculum that meets the needs for the programs that they are looking to deliver.

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the cost factor?***

**Ms. Roth:** Education is expensive and often unattainable for millions of adults. CBE enables students to progress at their own speed, achieving their goals (degrees or certificates) and demonstrating mastery, at their own pace. The ability to drive how fast they progress leads to significant cost savings, therefore making education available to millions that previously would not have had these opportunities.

**CEOCFO: *Which services have received the most traction? What are people missing that is important?***

**Ms. Roth:** Flat World's curriculum design services have been embraced because our design methodology, platform, and supporting services insure competencies are aligned with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. The learning paths to competencies focus on skills and knowledge that match those demanded by the current marketplace and directly relate to skills that would impress a hiring manager. People miss the fact that CBE can lead to that "last mile" the ultimate bridge between education and job placement. Workplace alignment is a critical component of many successful CBE programs.

**CEOCFO: *In competency based education, I understand that a student can work at their own pace. What are some of the other choices that are available to learners not found in a more structured curriculum?***

**Ms. Roth:** Millions of learners need a world where they can learn on their own schedules and on their unique paths without being constrained by the artificial deadlines set in the traditional credit-bound model. Flat World is already making this happen, bringing this world to life for the millions of underserved adults where life circumstances can get in the way of education goals and economic aspirations.

**"As pioneers in the creation of competency based education, Flat World excels in supporting our partners to deliver opportunities to those least well served by traditional higher education." - Jade Roth**

**CEOCFO: *What is the competitive landscape?***

**Ms. Roth:** There are many companies developing CBE solutions today, but Flat World's biggest risk is not competition. Our biggest risk is not listening to those who have been underserved by the current postsecondary education model. We must continue to understand the challenges faced in spending the necessary effort, time, and investment to acquire skills and knowledge directly related to improving economic well being, and we must focus on how to address those challenges.

**CEOCFO: *What has changed in your approach over time? What have you learned?***

**Ms. Roth:** Our partners use our platform to develop and customize specific programs for their targeted learners. The outcomes and competencies are absolutely clear and transparent to both the learner and the future employer, no longer is the degree a black box. As their programs grow, our partners evaluate and revise the program for maximum impact, insuring the skills developed and knowledge acquired prepare students to win new jobs and careers to move them up the ladder of economic success. This constant evaluation of what works and what doesn't enables us to respond, iterate and continually innovate – in other words, continually learn and adjust course to create the most compelling student experiences. As an example, we are currently rethinking our discussion boards so they become more than simply a place to post comments, but rather an integral part of the learning experience.

**CEOCFO: *Are there certain subjects that are more applicable to your approach?***

**Mr. Roth:** The more flexible you make a platform or the curriculum, the more subjects can be delivered effectively. As an example, it is very efficient to have an adaptive assessment in a healthcare certificate, but if you are taking a personal communications competency, what you really want is to video tape yourself giving a presentation, making sure that it has five key points that your faculty member wants you to have in that presentation, submit it and have it graded from a project perspective. Our platform enables all of these options.

**CEOCFO: *Why is Flat World Education noteworthy?***

**Mr. Roth:** Flat World is important because we believe in transforming an educational model that serves too few, too inefficiently, and at too high a cost. We lower the costs of education, improve learning outcomes, and strengthen students' motivation and creativity. As pioneers in the creation of competency based education, Flat World excels in supporting our partners to deliver opportunities to those least well served by traditional higher education. Underlying all we do is our philosophy of creating relevant, effective, measurable, and learner-driven education solutions.

**For more information visit: [www.flatworld.com](http://www.flatworld.com)**

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