Executive Interview

with **Graham Glass**,
CEO and Founder,
CYPHER Learning

Generative AI in Learning — Friend Not Foe

About CYPHER Learning

CYPHER Learning, a Brandon Hall Group™ Gold Smartchoice® Preferred Provider, is leading the necessary disruption of learning platforms to unleash human potential with modern learning. The company exists to ignite lifelong passions through personalized, engaging, and limitless learning experiences for all. CYPHER gives Learning and Development (L&D) professionals and educators more time to teach and train, builds human connection into everything they do — and delivers tailored learning experiences that are meaningful and measurable. The CYPHER platform is easy to use, beautifully designed and infused with AI-powered technology. Every aspect beams thoughtful innovation and engineering that puts people first. Millions of users experience their "just in time, just for me, just the way I want it" approach in 50+ languages with the CYPHER award-winning platform. See the modern learning platform at www.cypherlearning.com.

About Graham Glass

Graham Glass is the CEO and founder of CYPHER Learning, which provides learning platforms for millions of users across 20,000+ organizations around the world. He is an entrepreneur, educator, author and speaker, with more than 20 years of experience in the education and technology fields.

About Rachel Cooke

Rachel Cooke is Brandon Hall Group's Chief Operating Officer and Principal HCM Analyst. She is responsible for business operations, including client and member advisory services, marketing design, annual awards programs, conferences and the company's project management functions. She also leads Advancing Women in the Workplace and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, research and events. Rachel worked in the HCM research industry for 20+ years and held several key management and executive positions within the Talent and Learning Research, and Performance Improvement industries.

Q RACHEL

What is Generative AI and how can businesses start to apply it now?

A GRAHAM

You can ask generative AI a question and you can generate small bits of content, all the way to robust bits of content, in 50 languages and it will generally respond to you in seconds. This is quite amazing technology — and it's interesting for learning platforms.

A year ago in the distant past, you'd create a shell of a course because you're going to deploy it on our platform. Then you would either build it by hand — you'd type it all in and drag-and-drop videos, images and quizzes, etc. — or you would buy off-the-shelf content. Once you got the course created, you would deploy it and people would log on and take the course. We would give them AI-powered recommendations for additional courses, monitor their progress, analyze it and report on it, etc.

In the past, when people talked about AI, they normally talked about how you give it a problem like "create me a new chemical or create me a new process." Maybe the AI would do it, but people weren't used to an AI that you could talk to in regular language. When I started using ChatGPT, I started with something simple like, what is 2+2? And it gets 4. It's like, "Okay. But that was quite easy. Well, teach me a little bit about arithmetic."

It would say, "Okay, let's get going. What do you know so far?" It's like, "Wow, it's actually using the Socratic method to teach me arithmetic." I wasn't expecting that. Then I would say, "Well, what about calculus? What's the solution to this?" Any question I asked, it usually had a really good answer. You could use this in so many things, including actually building a course. We spent a lot of really intense engineering time figuring out all the bits and pieces. We're using generative AI to create entire high-quality courses.

Q RACHEL

How should we prepare for some jobs being replaced, and what can people do to advance or to re-skill?

A GRAHAM

First of all, I don't think there are any jobs in L&D that are at risk. But there are a lot of people who go to work and say, "Oh my goodness, this job is so boring. I just do the same thing again and again and again." They probably realize they can be replaced unless it involves a high degree of physicality. Even those jobs will be replaced eventually because humanoid robots are coming fairly soon as well.

(continued)

Any job that is tedious is ripe for replacement by AI, but the industries themselves are going to change or go away as well. For example, instead of an insurance claim inspector, you can have a little robot scanner that says, "Yeah, you got dinged that's going to cost you X." That would be an easy one to replace. However, what's happening is people are realizing that when you are teamed up with an AI, you can do more.

For example, take courseware. If you are building a course, you could use generative AI using the CYPHER platform in minutes and then personalize it. When everyone starts using VR, everyone's going to want VR courses, and old flat courses and a TV screen monitor are not going to cut it anymore. You're going to have people who become experts in building 3D immersive synthetic, simulated environments. That job doesn't even exist right now, but that's where humans are going to have to go to keep up with the technology.

Q RACHEL

What can you advise for Learning leaders who are exploring your application?

A GRAHAM

The CYPHER platform is not building 100% of the course. It's building about 80% because you always wanted to spend the last 20% fine-tuning it, reviewing it, adding your personal anecdotes and moving things around a little bit. When the generative AI does its work, it's not set in stone, but there's almost a finished product that you can then tweak. L&D teams have reacted extremely positively. This is going to be a game-changer for them, and it's going to give them so much time back to relieve the drudgery.

The CYPHER Learning platform allows you to create lots of variations very quickly. Rather than just generate it one time and say, "Hey, that's great. Let's just then fine-tune it," I'll say, "Generate five of them." To give it an idea of the cost, we only charge $5 to create that entire course. It's not like $10,000 and you've got to be really, really careful. You can generate five different versions of the same course for 25 bucks. Find the one course that speaks to you because they're all going to be a little bit different. Start with that one and evolve it into the finished product. Not only does it save you tons of time, but it allows you rapid iteration of course design that wasn't possible before because humans didn't have as many hours in a day to generate five different versions of the same course.

Q RACHEL

How do you measure the impact of the content and what does that look like from a learner perspective?

A ANDREW

What you want to do is you want to use the power of generative AI. CYPHER Learning has already shown that it can do an amazing job of creating formal courses and provide that generative AI directly to the end user. For example, if anyone in the workplace says, "How do I deal with a difficult customer in Brazil and get an incredibly detailed, well-thought-out response with images and recommendations and links to related topics, and maybe even a button that you can click where you can talk with an AI expert if you've still got questions?" If you can do that in 5 seconds, then that person's going to say, "Well, I'm going to use the generative AI first, and Google is my backup plan," versus, "I'm going to use Google first and then my learning platform is the backup plan."

People are going to be using generative AI throughout the day in their flow of work, and that's something that CYPHER Learning is releasing later this year. It'll have the power of generative AI built into the learning platform and available to the workers in the field.

Q RACHEL

How will people start to embrace generative AI?

A ANDREW

People don't fully internalize how personalized it is. Let me give you an example. I'm a home recording enthusiast and I've got this electronic keyboard called a Roland FANTOM-08. I have a very specific set of an instrument. I use Apple Logic recording software and a few others, and I wanted to set up my home studio. I used the CYPHER Learning platform to do that. What I did was I went and said, "I'm going to build a course," and it goes, "What do you want your course to be about?" I said, "Setting up a home studio." That was the title of the course.

Then there's a box for additional instructions. I say, "I want it to take into account a Roland 8 Synthesizer, FANTOM-08, Apple Logic and a few others." Then I said, "Make it humorous," and I included images. Ten minutes later, it built me the course specifically about my combination. It wasn't a generic "how to set up a home studio" course. It was how to set up a home studio with this and this and this, which is quite amazing.

(continued)

That's why generative AI is way better than searching on Google. If I went to Google and said, "How do I set up my studio with this and this and this," there's not going to be any video out there that covers that specific use case, and that goes for the work environment as well. As I said earlier, say I'm in customer support asking, "How do I deal with a difficult customer who's in Brazil and is having problems with X, Y, Z?" Generative AI will give you a specific recommendation on that one thing.

No L&D person can create a course that covers every possible scenario. One of the things that we're doing is adding functionality, where it can incorporate your private data into the courses and the end user's generative stuff. If you are in a particular company with specific processes and patterns and data, it can take that into account as well — it's super-personalized. If you're in L&D, people aren't expecting you to do that, but it does show you that by providing this power to the end user, you can get incredibly tailored content. There's no other way that you'd be able to get it.

Q RACHEL

What do you predict for the future of work next year and 10 years from now?

A GRAHAM

I think that everyone's life is going to be more interesting because, first of all, the workplace — even your industry — is going to change. The learning platform industry is already changing. Generative AI means the products are changing and what people are expecting is changing. If you are an educator, your world is changing because you used to be primarily the person who would provide the content to your audience, but now the audience can get hyper-personalized content.

There is a way to use AI to make your job more interesting and make you more productive. One prediction I have is that there's going to be more and more autonomous AI helping you. Right now, it's quite reactive. Pretty soon the AI is going to say, "By the way, Graham, have you thought about this?" Or, "Hey, Graham, would you like me to set this thing up for you?" Yes, please. And then 5 minutes later it'll say, "Okay, Graham, well, I've set this up for you. I'll send you a reminder in 10 days."

It's going to be much more bi-directional than it is now — and needless to say, CYPHER Learning is already working on plans for this autonomous aging concept as well. We're not resting on our laurels.

Q RACHEL

What are CYPHER Learning's plans for 2024?

A GRAHAM

It's all about rethinking education around AI-centric learning because it's not just about taking the way that people used to learn and packaging that with AI. 2024 is going to be the year of proactive AI engaging with you rather than just the other way around. AI is an amazing tool, so it'd be silly not to use it.

Here are some ways to listen to the interview on Brandon Hall Group's Excellence at Work Podcast:

iTunes

Spotify

YouTube

Brandon Hall Group
EXCELLENCE AT WORK

About Brandon Hall Group™

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 30 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group™ is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

Membership
Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Professional Certifications
Self-paced certification programs. Virtual group sessions for companies. In-person conferences and summits.

SOME WAYS WE CAN HELP

Advisory Offerings
Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

Excellence Awards
Three annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
recognizes world-class HCM programs that transform their organization and achieve breakthrough results. This designation is the next step beyond the HCM Excellence Awards, which focus on a single program, and looks at the department as a whole.

SMARTCHOICE® PREFERRED PROVIDER PROGRAM
uniquely places HCM service and technology companies at the top of organizations' consideration list of vendors. It adds an unmatched level of credibility based on BHG's twenty-eight-plus years of experience in evaluating and selecting the best solution providers for leading organizations around the world.