



Executive Interview



Why Learning Programs Need Room to Fail

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edflex



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About Edflex



Edflex is a learning curation platform that centralizes training content from across the web and its publishing partners into a single catalog spanning more than 230 topics. Their platform gives organizations a single entry point to a constantly updated library of courses, podcasts, videos and articles, in multiple languages, so learners can build skills continuously rather than waiting for the next scheduled training.

About Luis Camacho



Luis Camacho is Director of Customer Success for North America at Edflex, where he works with client organizations on how they roll out skill practice and AI-supported role play at scale.

About David Wentworth



This Executive Interview is moderated by **David Wentworth**, Managing Director of Learning and Talent at Brandon Hall Group™, a role he returned to after serving as Vice President and Talent Platform Evangelist at Schoox. He previously spent 11 years at Brandon Hall Group™ as Principal Analyst and his insights draw on nearly two decades of research, interviews and data analysis in the learning and talent space, including a prior role as a senior analyst at the Institute for Corporate Productivity.

The Skipped Step: Assessment First

Q David

What is the step organizations tend to skip when they jump straight to training instead of building in room to practice and fail?

A Luis

Learning is not a single event. It is a series of things that build toward a result, and the way that shows up at work is assessing the skills everyone already has before deciding what to train on. That is a real challenge, because most L&D leaders are wondering the same thing: what is the best way to assess? Is it a survey, or is it based on actual performance?

It is hard to expect every L&D leader to have deep expertise in every subject area across the organization, so figuring out how to accurately place each person at their current level, and then support them from there, is critical. Everybody in an organization is going to be at a different point in their career, and that has to inform the starting point.

Every Leader is Starting Somewhere Different

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Q David

What does it cost an organization when it skips that assessment step and pushes the same training at everyone regardless of where they already stand?

A Luis

It goes back to engagement. I have seen this many times: you start with a standardized program, which is not inherently wrong, but someone earlier in their progression finds it too complex and gets discouraged, and not everyone is a lifelong learner. The same thing

The Personalization Sweet Spot

happens in reverse for someone more advanced, who does not see the content as relevant. There is a sweet spot and personalization matters both for how people feel about the experience and for efficiency.

A standard program that takes two hours might only need to take thirty or forty five minutes for someone at an intermediate or advanced level. That extra time goes back into using the new skill to actually work on business outcomes, whether that is better communication or a negotiation that produces a real result for the organization. Connecting the skill being developed to the company's KPIs and targets is where this becomes effective rather than theoretical.

Q David

What changes about people's comfort with failing at work when they are practicing with an AI agent or coach instead of a manager or peer?

A Luis

I would start by saying we should approach AI as a tool. We still need the human element, and the question is how we use technology to facilitate that for our teams. For a global organization, scalability and cost effectiveness are crucial when you have people across time zones, cultures and languages. Technology lets you run a standardized program with clear, trackable metrics without the cost of training people live and in person in every location.

Removing the Power Dynamic

AI removes some of the power dynamic that comes with practicing in front of a manager or leader.

On the human side, AI removes some of the power dynamic that comes with practicing in front of a manager or leader. I remember being pulled up in front of about 400 people at a kickoff event for a live role play. As someone who is more introverted, that is overwhelming. You want to perform well, but you never got the chance to actually get comfortable with the material first, to make it sound

Speak the Businesses Language

like you rather than a script. Removing that pressure creates a safe space to mold new behavior in your own words before you ever have to do it in front of people.

Q David

How do you make the case to a manager or a business leader that the extra time practice takes is worth it?

A Luis

The question every leader should ask is whether they would rather have their team practice on a real client or stakeholder, where getting it wrong could cost thousands of dollars or real business impact, or spend a few hours in training first so they get it right, or close to right, the first time. That translates directly to effectiveness and to business outcomes.

The disconnect is usually about speaking the business's language: explaining how a training session or role play connects to the KPIs a leader already cares about, whether that is tied to a bonus, a promotion or a mobility opportunity. It is not only about a behavior in isolation. It has to connect to a business outcome for it to click, and the teams I have seen get the most value are the ones who clearly understand why the practice matters to them personally.

From Practice to Performance

It has to connect to a business outcome for it to click.

Q David

How does a role play session actually change what someone does in a real conversation down the road?

Technology Doesn't Get Tired

A Luis

Every role play tool is different, so I can speak to how we approach it. Practice is not just about running through a sample difficult conversation. There has to be feedback so the learner understands what they did well and what they can improve.

Technology does not get tired, which matters, because in a traditional setup a manager might run through the same role play with a dozen people in a day, and by the time they reach the last person on the list, the feedback may not be as objective or as complete. With live feedback built into the exercise, learners get recommendations in real time, things like asking more questions or trying a different framework, which makes them self-conscious in a good way about what they should be doing differently.

There is also a gamification element. People like seeing progress, whether that is a box turning green or a sense of closing the gap on a goal. That validation, seeing yourself actually improve at the thing you are working on, is human nature, and it makes people want to try again to do better.

Feedback in the Flow of Work

We try to keep everything in the flow of work on the same screen.

Q David

What does that real-time feedback actually look like on screen for the learner?

A Luis

We try to keep everything in the flow of work on the same screen. While the exercise is happening, there are reminders of the goals for that conversation, because it is easy to lose track in the moment. There is positive reinforcement when a goal is hit, a visual cue and a sound, similar to what you would see in a game, which lets the

What this Frees Managers to Do

learner stay focused on the exercise rather than wondering how they are doing.

Alongside that are clear, actionable recommendations. Telling someone to be more productive does not mean anything on its own. What matters is telling them exactly what to try differently, something specific enough that they can apply it in the exercise itself.

Q David

With a tool handling the immediate, tactical feedback, what does that free the manager up to do?

A Luis

Managers benefit from having a standardized, objective way to evaluate everyone, which removes bias from the performance conversation. There is a clear list of skills and where each person lands on them, so the conversation is fair rather than relying on a manager's general impression.

Individual contributors also feel the process is fair, because the evaluation is not as subjective. That makes the performance review itself more efficient, and it lets managers move on to the bigger, more strategic question of how to develop each person on the things that are unique to them.

Beyond the Box to Check

Every organization has its own data, so the starting point is knowing your baseline.

Q David

How do organizations make sure this practice is measurably changing behavior rather than just becoming another box to check?

Tie Practice to Real Outcomes

A Luis

This is the most important part. Every organization has its own data, so the starting point is knowing your baseline, whether the goal is retention, cost savings, accelerating a sales pipeline or getting a team certified on a new technology.

From there, that broad goal has to be broken down into the specific, trackable behaviors that actually move it, whether that is a new tool, a soft skill or a new talk track. None of that should rely only on the learning tools themselves.

It also needs other signals from the organization, like recorded calls, manager observation or tracked usage of a tool in the flow of work. Keeping people connected to the reason behind the practice, tying a difficult conversation back to retention or performance or a result the team actually cares about, is what sustains engagement and gets buy-in from leaders to invest the time in the first place.

Q David

What opportunity do you see for democratizing skills like critical thinking and emotional intelligence, which have traditionally been reserved for high-touch leadership development, across the broader employee population?

A Luis

There is also a self-awareness piece. If you have done a job well for years, it is natural to feel like there is nothing left to learn, and that itself is a gap in self-awareness. A safe way to assess your own level is often the missing first step, because if you do not know where you stand, you do not know where to start.

Democratizing Critical Skills

If you do not know where you stand, you do not know where to start.

Assessment is the entry point that tells you where to go, and from there you move into learning and then into practice. It becomes a full loop, and making that available more broadly, not just to leadership, gives more people the chance to build skills they might otherwise avoid because they are afraid of getting it wrong in front of someone.



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