



The Neil Thompson Academy

Prospectus



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Develop Your Career with the Neil Thompson Academy

What is the Neil Thompson Academy?

The Neil Thompson Academy is a focal point for the work of renowned author and educator Neil Thompson. It offers a growing selection of learning resources based on Neil's wide range of books and other publications and his over 45 years of experience of helping individuals and organisations to learn, develop and flourish.

Who is Neil Thompson?



Professor Neil Thompson is an independent writer, educator and adviser. Very many people have come to see Neil as a guide and mentor, not only on their learning journey, but also on their whole outlook on life, people, problems and potential. With an impeccable academic pedigree, an outstanding publications record and a wealth of direct experience of making a positive difference in a number of ways, he stands out as a source of invaluable wisdom and guidance.

He has held full or honorary professorships at five UK universities and is currently a visiting professor at the Open University. He has

well over 45 years' experience in the helping professions as a practitioner, manager, educator and consultant.

He has over 50 books to his name. These include:

Promoting Equality (Bloomsbury, 4th edn, 2018)

Effective Communication (Bloomsbury, 3rd edn, 2018)

The Values-based Practice Manual (with Bernard Moss, Avenue Media Solutions, 2020)

People Skills (Bloomsbury, 5th edn, 2021)

Anti-racism for Beginners (Avenue Media Solutions, 2021)

The Managing People Practice Manual (Avenue Media Solutions, 2022)

The Critically Reflective Practitioner (with Sue Thompson, Bloomsbury, 3rd edn, 2023)

The Managing Stress Practice Manual (Critical Publishing, 2nd edn, 2024)

The Problem Solver's Practice Manual (Critical Publishing, 2nd edn, 2025)

He has qualifications in social work, management (MBA), training and development, mediation and dispute resolution, as well as a first-class honours degree in Social Sciences, a doctorate (PhD) and a higher doctorate (DLitt). Neil is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and the Royal Society of Arts, elected to the latter on the basis of his contribution to workplace learning. He was the founding editor of the *British Journal of Occupational Learning*.

In addition to running the Neil Thompson Academy, he acts as a consultant to the Vigoroom employee wellness platform.

His website, with his acclaimed *Manifesto for Making a Difference*, is at www.NeilThompson.info.

Why develop your career in management and leadership?

Managers and leaders have a crucial role to play in securing the success of the organisation and in helping employees to flourish and achieve the best results. Effective managers and leaders can achieve immense job satisfaction as a result of the positive difference they can make.

A qualification in management and leadership can be a boost to not only career prospects in terms of potential promotion, but also to personal and professional development that can lead to greater work enjoyment and wellbeing.

What does the Academy offer?

The main focus of the Academy is helping individuals and organisations to achieve their goals and to keep learning. We are able to do this in a number of ways:

Books and training manuals

Neil has produced a number books and manuals that have earned him a well-deserved reputation for explaining complex ideas clearly and accessibly without oversimplifying them and for successfully blending theory and practice.

The Avenue Subscription Service

This gives access to over 60 online courses developed by Neil and a small group of trusted colleagues. The service is available to individuals at just £99 + VAT, which works out at less than £2 per course.

Organisations can gain access to the courses for up to 300 staff for just £3,000 + VAT, an amazingly low price for such quality and range. Visit www.NeilThompson.info/subscription-service/ to find out more.

Sophisticated learning systems

A learning system is much more than a conventional online course. Our systems provide not only access to video materials and extensive learning materials, but also offer a structured pathway to follow to bring the learning to life and make a positive difference to the quality of your practice.

Traditionally, learning resources simply offer a range of relevant insights, some exercises to help consolidate the learning and some suggestions about how to use the learning in practice. By contrast, our systems offer a step-by-step process geared towards maximising the learning and actually putting it into practice.

Leading for Success An expert-led programme geared towards developing excellence in leading teams. Participants will be helped to achieve optimal results through effective team management.

System3V Based on the V2V principle of the value of converting vicious circles into virtuous ones, this innovative programme of learning offers an excellent basis for people management.

Leading for Success can be used as the basis of a Level 5 qualification in Management and Leadership and *System3V* can contribute to a Diploma in Strategic Leadership Practice at Level 7.

Chartered Management Institute qualifications

The Academy works in partnership with TFL Education to offer opportunities to obtain qualifications in management and leadership accredited by the Chartered Management Institute.

These are available at three levels:

- *CMI Awards* An Award is made on successful completion of a particular unit of study.
- *CMI Certificates* A Certificate is awarded on successful completion of two or more particular units of study (depending on each unit's credit value).
- *CMI Diplomas* A Diploma is awarded on the successful completion of a number of study units (again depending on each unit's credit value).

Participants in *Leading for Success* and *System3V* are eligible to register for a Certificate in Level 5 or 7 respectively.

See the Appendix for details of the diploma options available.

Our philosophy of learning

Hear what Neil has to say about effective learning ...

If we think back over our lives to date and how formal learning has played a part in that, it should be apparent that what we learn and how we learn it are largely decided by other people. Starting from our school days, right through to higher education and in-service training in employment, other people have decided the curriculum and how it should be delivered. This approach has its

advantages but is it the best way to learn? Does it produce the best results? We have known for quite some time that different people learn in different ways, so there will inevitably be drawbacks in a one-size-fits-all approach.

At the Neil Thompson Academy, we have long believed in self-directed learning where you decide what you want to learn and how you are going to learn it as the most effective form of learning. In technical terms, you decide the learning outcomes and the learning pathway that you feel will work best for you. In this way, teachers, trainers and tutors play a facilitative role, helping you to decide, rather than deciding for you. This approach – known formally as 'heutagogy' – gives you considerable freedom and flexibility and allows you to tailor the learning to your specific needs and circumstances. There is therefore much to be gained from adopting a self-directed learning approach. Our *Boost Your Learning to the Full* programme has been developed to help you with this.

Likewise, the Avenue Subscription Service, with its wide range of courses to choose from – over 60 in total – gives you considerable flexibility to choose the options that best fit your needs and your plans. Once you have finished a course, you can decide whether to do a different course or do more work on the learning you gained from doing the course, or both. When it comes to gaining a formal qualification, a balance is required. This is because awarding bodies have to set standardised expectations so that

the qualifications awarded are comparable with others of the same level.

The Chartered Management Institute is no different in this regard. So, when it comes to registering for a CMI qualification, certain aspects of the learning are predefined. However, this does not mean you have no flexibility or no scope for focusing on the issues that are of particular interest to you or to your workplace. As I say, it is a matter of balance. To obtain an Award, Certificate or Diploma, you will need to successfully complete the associated assignments. These are predefined by the CMI, but they are not like a maths test where there is just one right answer. An assignment is intended to test your understanding in order to verify that you have reached the required standard to justify being awarded the qualification. However, you have a degree of flexibility in terms of how you demonstrate that understanding. Again, it is important to note that it is not about 'right answers' – it is about answers that convince the marker that you have developed a sufficiently good understanding of the issues covered and how they apply to a real-life setting.

So, to a large extent, you will be in the driving seat of your own learning, albeit within the confines of the CMI system. But, being in the driving seat does not mean you are on your own. We will be able to give you guidance when you need it (see the section on What you can expect). As we mentioned earlier, a CMI qualification can make a world of difference to your career and

your ability to flourish in your work and your life. Grasp the opportunity while you can.

Our philosophy of management and leadership

As my career has developed, I have noticed major changes in how management and leadership are understood and practised. Thankfully, these changes have, for the most part, been positive and welcome. In the early stages of my career, few managers had a management qualification, and many did not see any value in achieving one. Now, however, it is quite common for managers to have qualifications and those who do not have any are in danger of being left behind.

This emphasis on the importance of qualifications is rooted in the growing recognition that management and leadership roles are difficult, challenging and complex if done properly. As such, they can be incredibly rewarding. My philosophy of management and leadership has emerged from: (i) being managed: I have been very fortunate in my career to have had both excellent and appalling managers, as this has allowed me to learn so much from seeing the many differences between the two; (ii) studying management and leadership, not just through formal learning, such as my MBA, but also from extensive reading of the huge literature base around management and leadership; (iii) practising as a manager, including dealing with some particularly challenging situations (iv) teaching and training on these issues and learning so much from the insights and experience of students

and course participants; (v) acting as a consultant to various organisations to help them to tackle problems and realise potential; and (vi) writing about management and leadership – writing is a good way of crystallising and consolidating learning.

A full account of my philosophy of management and leadership would be a very lengthy document, but I can summarise it in the form of a baker's dozen of key principles:

1. Management and leadership are different, but they overlap in some ways and they are both needed for the best results.
2. Organisational success depends on people, who they are, how they are treated and how they are led.
3. People perform better when they feel valued supported and safe.
4. People who don't keep learning can stagnate and become unsafe practitioners and managers.
5. Health and wellbeing are key components of an effective, sustainable organisation, and not just a current fashionable trend.
6. Equality, diversity and inclusion are about getting the best out of people for everyone's benefit – they are not about being woke or politically correct.
7. A clear, workable vision, well articulated, is essential.
8. The vision needs to be underpinned by explicit meaningful values that are real, not just rhetorical.
9. Anyone can make a mistake and everyone can learn.

10. A key part of leadership is shaping the culture in a positive direction.
11. Leaders need to take ownership of their choices and decisions and support their followers in doing the same.
12. Leaders need to earn trust, respect and credibility.
13. Staff are happier, more productive and engaged and less likely to leave if they are included and heard – the days of a simplistic command and control approach are now numbered.

There is so much more I could say, but I hope that this brief overview will be enough to let you know where I am coming from and where I am trying to help you get to. If you want to know more, I would point you in the direction of my *The Managing People Practice Manual* (Avenue Media Solutions, 2022).

Meet the team

Working alongside Neil are two senior consultants within the Academy:

- **Pauline Bowe, Certified Principal Business Psychologist** An expert in mental toughness and its role in effective leadership. She has a strong background in coaching and mentoring and is currently involved in doctoral research.
- **Dr Sue Thompson** Sue is a well-published author with extensive experience of learner support in a variety of settings. She has been a successful company director for over 20 years.

The Academy works closely with TFL Education under the guidance of management and leadership expert Aiden Harper.

I'm interested, what do I do now?

If you feel any of the Academy's offerings are for you, you will find further information at www.NeilThompson.info and, if you have any questions, you can contact Neil directly via the website. He will be happy to help you as best he can.



Appendix: Obtaining a CMI Qualification

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The Diplomas

We are able to offer diplomas at Level 5 (equivalent to the early stages of a BA degree) and at Level 7 (equivalent to Master's level).

The diplomas are available in three forms. One focuses on people management and leadership. It covers core issues in relation to management and leadership, but with additional emphasis on the role of engagement and employee wellbeing as key factors in relation to effective people management and overall organisational success.

The others are intended for actual and aspiring managers in the care sector, one for adult social care and the other for children's social care. So, in addition to covering core issues in relation to management and leadership, they have an additional emphasis on challenges and circumstances that arise in the fields of social work and social care.

NB 37 credits are needed for a diploma.

Each Diploma includes materials specific to the area of practice concerned, together with learning resources that apply to management and leadership across all sectors and settings.

To obtain the qualification, you need to pass the assignments associated with each unit.

Level 5 Diploma in Adult Social Care Leadership
Level 5 Diploma in Children’s Social Care Leadership
Level 5 Diploma in People Management, Engagement and Wellbeing

Unit reference	Unit title	Credits
503	Principles of Managing and Leading Individuals and Teams to Achieve Success	5
526	Principles of Leadership Practice	8
506	Managing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	5
507	Principles of Delivering Coaching and Mentoring	5
511	Principles of Recruiting, Selecting and Retaining Talent	5
522	Managing the Customer Experience	5
525	Using Reflective Practice to Inform Personal and Professional Development	5
Total		38

Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Leadership in Social Care
Level 7 Diploma in Strategic People Management, Engagement and Wellbeing

702	Leading and Developing People to Optimise Performance	10
716	Strategic Approaches to Mental Health and Wellbeing	7
714	Personal and Professional Development	9
715	Strategic Approaches to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	8
612	Coaching Skills for Leaders	7
Total		41

What you can expect

If you decide to register for a diploma with us, you can expect help in the following ways:

1. A welcome video that sets the scene of your studies for the Diploma you have chosen to register for.
2. Access to a password-protected website where you will find:
 - a. An introductory guide that gives you an overview of the process you will go through and what will be expected of you to make sure that you achieve success.
 - b. A 'Preparing to Study' video.
 - c. A specially designed self-assessment tool to help prepare you for your studies.
 - d. An introductory 'keynote' video for each unit.
 - e. A Success Guide for each unit, explaining what is involved in terms of the curriculum.
 - f. A Study Guide for each unit that provides you with guidance about the learning you will need to do, how you can access the online learning resources and suggestions for what you should focus on.
 - g. An Assignment Guide for each unit that gives you clear and detailed instructions on what you need to do to complete the assignments.
 - h. An assignment checklist to give you a helpful framework for your completing your assignments.
3. A Diploma Companion that serves as a workbook to help you think through the important issues you are studying and explore how they can be used in your day-to-day practice.
4. Feedback and support to help you achieve success. You will receive unlimited online one-to-one tutor support via Zoom from our strategic partners TFL Education to support you in completing your assignments.
5. You will receive complimentary Affiliate membership of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) for the duration of your

qualification studies, allowing you the opportunity to network with professionals.

6. Access to *Management Direct*. This is the CMI's extensive online portal of up-to-the-minute management and leadership resources. With a wide range of content available, including checklists, videos, e-books, articles and journals; all accessible from any PC, tablet or mobile device, you can select resources to help you develop your knowledge and understanding and to help you complete your assignments. Upon registration for your qualification studies, the CMI will send you a welcome email with your Username and Password to access *Management Direct*.
7. You will also have access to the CMI's Career Development Centre which provides you with a wealth of tools, information and advice to support your self-development throughout your professional journey.
8. Additional learning resources developed or collated by Neil, including free access to his range of development tools.



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Avenue House, 1, Worcester Road,
Bangor on Dee, Wrexham, LL13 0JB

www.NeilThompson.info