Student-centred partnerships between Dutch vocational popular music schools and music companies

Developing a framework for partnership design based on A&R-tool The Cycle

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Thesis Abstract

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The Dutch education system currently includes 11 vocational music academies with around 1,200 students enrolled in a popular music course. This high number of music students makes the schools interesting talent pools for music companies. Additionally, the academies are government-funded and music companies welcome alternatives to the traditional model for artist development, particularly since album sales have dropped. This results in music companies signing artists that are still enrolled in a vocational music course. For such students, combining academic and industrial activities can be a challenge with eventually dropping out being a conceivable risk. A student-centred collaboration between the involved academy and company is a solution to ensure the students successfully combine their course with the start of their professional career.

This thesis describes the development of a framework for the design and implementation of student-centred partnerships between Dutch vocational music schools and music companies. The study explores different approaches to dealing with vocational students involved in extensive professional activities. Additionally, it maps the key issues for effective collaboration between the involved school and company. These key issues are explored in more detail by reviewing case studies of education-industry collaborations. With the partnerships addressing practical as well as substantive issues, the research includes the Artist & Repertoire model *The Cycle*.

The framework for partnership design is presented in two handbooks targeted at academic professionals and industrial professionals respectively. The handbooks describe the framework and provide relevant contextual information on Dutch vocational music education and the music industry. Additionally, the handbooks clarify the roles and responsibilities of the involved music academy and the music company within a collaboration. With the handbooks guiding them through the process, the school and the company are able to design and implement a partnership benefiting the student, the school and the company.

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Preface

This thesis describes my research based in the context of Dutch vocational music education. The study focuses on partnerships between vocational schools and music companies, designed to cater to the needs of an individual student. The main goal of the study is to develop a framework for the design of such partnerships. Therefore, the study includes research on the Dutch vocational education system to identify the (im)possibilities for customising an individual student's curriculum. In addition, the topic of curriculum customisation is addressed in the case study review included in this study. Discussing my research with international education professionals I have found that academic structures in other countries appear to be less flexible than the framework for Dutch vocational music education. The student-centred partnerships between music schools and music companies described in this thesis therefore include components that might only be achievable in the Dutch education system. In particular, the framework for partnership design developed during this study includes elements of curriculum customisation that might not be attainable in other, more rigid, education structures. Therefore, it is essential to review this thesis and my research within the context of Dutch vocational music education. For this reason, a comprehensive overview of the framework for Dutch vocational music education is provided in this thesis for professionals unfamiliar with the Dutch education system. With the research restricted to this specific context, this thesis does not address the application of my findings to other education structures.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Professional music education in the Netherlands

The Dutch public education system currently includes 19 music academies: eight universities of the arts and 11 schools for vocational education. Today, approximately 1,200 students are enrolled in a popular music course at these vocational schools. With an increasing number of their alumni successful in today's music industry, the courses are considered to be of a high quality. For music companies, the combination of large quantity and high quality makes the schools interesting talent pools to reach out to. Adding the fact that the academies are government-funded, music companies have been showing increasing interest in vocational music education. With the traditional mechanism for artist development affected by the drop in physical album sales, the competition for young talented artists is high and alternative funding is welcomed. This results in music companies signing young artists that are still enrolled in a vocational music course. For such a student, combining academic and industrial activities can be a challenge with eventually dropping out being a conceivable risk. Around 80% of the vocational music students finish the three-year course without significant problems, about 20% withdraws or moves into a different training domain (DUO 2016). The largest group of withdrawals consists of students who underestimated the demands of the program, demonstrated a lack of talent and/or discipline or left because of personal reasons. There is also a group, however, that does not finish their popular music course because they do not succeed in combining their academic and industrial activities. These students either no longer feel the necessity for further education when active in the 'real world', or they simply do not have enough time to finish their studies. These students feel they have to choose one of two paths: the industrial plan or the curriculum. The last decade has shown that students tend to go with the first option.

This situation is detrimental to the music student, the music academy, and the music company. Dropping out of school, the student becomes dependent on the industrial plan. Whenever this plan does not succeed, the student has neither a successful career nor do they have a diploma to fall back upon. For the music academy, the disadvantage is two-fold. Firstly, the reputation of the school suffers from the best students leaving the school. Secondly, the Dutch vocational system includes *output funding*, meaning that academies get 20% of the governmental funding for a student only when this student receives their diploma. Students dropping out therefore cause academies to miss out on substantial resources. For the music company, the problem of a student dropping out is mainly of a financial nature. While the artist is enrolled in a music course, the artistic

development of the student is almost completely government-funded. Consequently, the music company can keep investments low with the student receiving songwriting lessons, instrumental training, studio recording time, etc. at the music academy. Saving on artist development costs, the music company can reduce the risk to their investment.

1.2 The Music Industry

The vocational music schools prepare their students for the (inter)national music industry. This sector is a highly fragmented industry consisting of thousands of companies ranging from one-man agencies to multinationals. This makes it a challenge to gain insights into all elements of the industry; multiple angles of approach can be used to describe the industry. For this study, we use the three musical revenue sources to define the sector: *copyright*, *master- and neighbouring rights* and *performance fees*. Each revenue source is a subsector of the music industry, together including all possible music companies. Note that this overview only includes the core divisions of the music industry organised around the revenue sources linked to the three possible musical artefacts. Companies operating in adjacent areas such as merchandise are not included in this study.

Copyright: The Publishing Industry

Artists own the copyright of the songs they compose, meaning that they possess the sole authority to *publish* the song and to *reproduce* the song. When, for example, releasing a physical album, the artist is exploiting both rights: the song is made public with the release of the album and by producing multiple CD's the song is reproduced. Songs are also published when used for a commercial or film, performed live on stage or played on the radio. The organisation or individual responsible for making the work public is required to pay an allowance. In the examples above this fee would be paid by the broadcaster of the commercial/film, the owner of the venue and the radio station. The fees are collected and then paid to the right holder(s) by Performing Rights Organisations such as BMI, ASCAP, SESAC (US), PRS (UK) and BUMA (NL). To maximally exploit the copyright of a song, it should appear as often as possible on TV, on the radio, in games, online, etc. Companies that are specialized in making these synchronization-deals are publishers and sync-agencies. These companies manage catalogues of songs, actively trying to get them published. In exchange for their services they usually get a cut of 1/3 of the royalties earned.

Master- and neighbouring rights: The Record Industry

The owner of the *master* (the original recording) has the right to publish and sell it. This right is exploited when recordings are sold, both digitally and physically. The master

right is owned by the entity that funded the recording; mostly being the artist itself or a record company. There are two types of record companies: *independents* (several thousand around the world) and the *majors* Sony Music, Universal Music, and Warner Music. Independents differ from the majors being smaller companies, usually focusing on a specific style or genre. Neighbouring rights do not apply to the author of the song, but to the artists performing the song on the recording, and to the producer(s). The author and performer of a song can be the same artist as seen with for example singer-songwriters. The collection and payout of these royalties differ per country and per platform. In the US, recording artists do not get paid when their song is played on the radio, but they do receive a fee when played on a digital platform. In most countries however, the royalties are collected in the same way as the performance royalties. Some countries have assigned this to specialized organisations such as SENA in The Netherlands.

Performance fees: The Live Industry

A straightforward source of income for artists is getting paid for a performance. Artists can arrange their own bookings or collaborate with a booking agency. These companies usually get a cut of 15% of the performance fee for their services.

Artists can also make money from the live industry via the revenue source copyright. When performing self-written songs for an audience, they are making them public. Therefore, the owner of the venue or festival organiser has to pay a fee to the Performing Rights Organisation, which will then pay the author of the song.

1.3 The Real Band

Since 2011 I have been involved with Artist & Repertoire (A&R) network *The Real Band* (TRB). The independent network connects over 20 music academies and music companies, working together on the development of the most talented music students. Additionally, it aims to contribute to the development of higher and vocational popular music education.

- **Music schools** are provided with extra coaching for their most talented students and are supported in the development of curricula and staff-mobility;

- For **music companies,** The Real Band offers an innovative, sustainable and cheap alternative for Artist & Repertoire;

- Successful **music students** receive tailormade coaching programmes fitted to their specific needs, enabling them to combine their music course with their professional activities.

The core business of The Real Band is to support music students with extensive professional activities while still enrolled in a music course. The organisation enables these students to combine the start of their professional career with their education. One of my responsibilities within TRB is to initiate and supervise these projects, connecting the student, the academy, and the industry partner. With the collaborations varying in levels of quality and success, a framework is needed to structure the design and implementation of the coaching programs, guaranteeing a high-level partnership. Presenting the framework in a handbook to the educational and industrial partner should better prepare them for working within such a collaboration, resulting in more successful partnerships. Additionally, The Real Band is a non-profit organisation aiming at enhancing education-industry collaboration in the music sector. Recognizing the large quantity and high quality of Dutch popular music education, the organisation believes that the sector would benefit from schools and companies collaborating on the development of the next generation of Dutch artists. In such an environment, student-centred partnerships are formed organically and TRB is no longer needed as a catalyst. This study is to be seen as a contribution to that process.

1.4 A&R and *The Cycle*

With a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Arts in the field of music production and a Master of Music on the subject of Artist and Repertoire, I coordinate the projects around individual students with an extensive knowledge of music production and artist development. This enables me to approach the collaborations from a musical/artistical point of view. The academy and the company involved in a project have their own vision on the student's development. Both translate this vision into a development plan: the curriculum of the school and the artist development plan of the company. To connect the two plans, I use my knowledge of music production processes, (design) strategies and A&R to analyse the different approaches used for this translation and the disparities caused by it. This makes me believe that an effective framework for designing well-functioning partnerships could be based on A&R principles as well. In specific, I look at A&R-tool *The Cycle* as developed by music company *Dox Records*. It is used to transform an artistic vision on an artist's career into an artist development plan. *The Cycle* consists of the three phases *writing*, *recording* and *performing*, capturing every aspect of an artist's work. It is used to design the artist development plan and also provides a communication tool for all stakeholders. Since the principles of *The Cycle* are used within TRB when designing and coordinating student-centred projects, the model is included in this research to identify the key issues for partnership design based on A&R.

2. Critical Review

2.1 Definitions and restrictions

The research for this study is restricted to popular music courses provided by Dutch vocational education institutions. Conceptually there is a difference between vocational *training* and vocational *education* (Lauglo 1993, p.1). The latter aims to provide general education in addition to the mastery of a specific set of skills. Although formally no distinction between the two is made within the Dutch education system, the term vocational *education* is most applicable to vocational music academies. This becomes clear in Chapter 4.3 when elaborating on the curricula provided by the vocational music schools. In this study, they are referred to as *schools*, *academies* or *vocational (music) institutions*.

The term *popular music* is a very general classification covering a wide range of (sub)genres. The term is often mistakenly used interchangeably with 'pop music' which is a separate genre with distinct characteristics. 'Popular music' is however defined as "the music since industrialization in the 1800s that is most in line with the tastes and interests of the urban middle class" (Sadie and Tyrrell 2001, p.142), thus covering a multitude of genres. For this study, I restrict popular music to the music styles present within the vocational music schools. Although most academies present their courses as 'Popular Music', none of them define the term any further in their communication. The presentations of the courses on for example websites and in syllabi focus on the skills developed during the course and the future field of work. Apparently, there is no need for the schools to explicitly define popular music, which suggests an unwritten, commonly shared definition of the term within vocational music education. This is supported by reviewing the Qualification Document, the substantive framework for all music courses explained further in Chapter 4.2. Although the document explains the required skills and knowledge for a professional musician, the matter of genre is not addressed in the document. With the schools not excluding any music styles beforehand, it can be concluded that the term popular music is in fact defined by the students enrolling in the course and the genres they are active in. For several projects and classes, the repertoire is provided by the school. This is only the case when the repertoire is a means to teach students about style, sound, genre development, music history, music theory, etc. When it comes to developing their own act, students are free to choose their own style of music. In theory, this means the definition of Sadie and Tyrrell (2001, p.142) is applicable. However, reviewing the vocational music alumni of the last decade shows a more limited definition. Three main genres can be distinguished: pop/rock,

electronic music, and urban/hip-hop.

The **pop/rock** music is based on *songs* including the elements of rhythm, harmony, melody and lyrics, mostly performed using mainly acoustic instruments. Formats range from individual singer-songwriters to rock bands including several members. The acts, in general, show a traditional use of instruments including drums, guitar and keyboards. The addition of electronics such as drum-computers or live-sampling in live performances is seen occasionally.

The **electronic music** covers the range of computer-based genres from Disco originated in the 1970s and House in the 1980s, all the way up to current popular subgenres such as Tropical house, UK funky, and Future House. The music is beat- and sound orientated, other characteristics are the limited presence of acoustic instruments and tension curves explicitly leading to the 'hook'; the catchy, memorable instrumental/vocal phrase composed to catch the ear of the listener. Artists active in these genres traditionally focus on developing repertoire for live performances of DJ's in clubs and on festivals. Artists are the (co)creator of the tracks (producer), performing them live on stage (DJ) or both (DJ/producer).

The **urban/hip-hop** music is based on beats as a fundament for the rhythmic, rhyming speech (rap) and/or melodic vocals. Artists are a producer, DJ or vocalist, or a combination of the three. A key feature of the music is the use of sampled beats and/or melodic (bass) lines as a basis for new tracks. Noteworthy is the remarkable upswing of Dutch-spoken hip-hop seen at vocational schools. This is explained by the current success of Dutch-speaking hip-hop artists in today's Dutch music industry such as Lil' Kleine, Ronnie Flex, Bokoesam, Broederliefde and Sevn Alias.

This study focuses on popular music students that combine their course with extensive activities in the professional field. These students are defined as *signed students* since they get involved with a music company while still enrolled in the course. The involvement of an industrial partner results in the situation where an artist development plan for the student is added to their curriculum, creating two possible problems: a practical problem and an artistic mismatch of the two plans.

Researching the tailormade coaching programmes around successful students, the study focuses on strategies to design them. Included are the principles of *The Cycle* and strategies found in artist development. This study only includes strategies providing in the translation of an artistic vision into a development and/or production plan leading to a musical artefact such as a composition, a recording, a live show, etc. Approaching artist development at the level of strategy and design excludes components relevant to the *execution* of a music production plan such as technology or performance, only focusing on the *design* of the plan. This includes the roles of the three key-players

within these programmes: the student, the music academy and the company. Only the tasks and responsibilities of these stakeholders within the collaboration are addressed, this study does not include in-depth research on their academic, artistic or business activities outside the coaching programme. This restricts the research to the individual students and the challenge of enabling them to successfully combine their academic and industrial activities.

The challenges at the base of this study are the result of developments in music education as well as in the music industry. These specifically focus on developments affecting artist development within the industry. Therefore, the study addresses Artist & Repertoire, traditionally carried out by record companies:

> "The Artist and Repertoire (A&R) department is concerned with the artistic development of the record company. […] the A&R staff is responsible for bringing new talent to the label. In addition, it's their responsibility to serve as the creative contact point between the artists, producer, manager, and record company. They're involved in helping the artist select material, a studio, and a producer."
> (Frascogna and Hetherington 2004, p.198)

To ensure not excluding any recent developments affecting A&R by using a too traditional interpretation, A&R is defined slightly more general as the domain within the music industry responsible for the *scouting* and *development* of new artists.

2.2 Research on Dutch professional performing arts education

Since 2004 vocational schools have the possibility of offering courses in the field of the performing arts, starting with courses in dancing and acting (Linden 2012). The first popular music courses were added to the training domain in 2006 (DUO 2014). During the past decade a lot of research has been done on Dutch professional performing arts education including prominent studies by Buisman et al. (2010), Schreven en Rijk, de (2011), Commissie Arbeidsmarktverkenning Cultuursector (2016), Fuhr, von der (2016) and Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (2017). Most research in this area is commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science or by semi-governmental organisations active in the field of education policy, labour market research or statistics. The vast majority of the studies therefore focuses on one of two subjects. First of all, there is research on the number of graduates in relation to the students initially enrolled in the course, and on the percentage of drop-outs. These studies often include a quantitative comparison with other training domains. Secondly, studies cover the subject of labour market relevance. Researching alumni of professional performing arts schools, the studies provide an overview of the sector in which the alumni operate. The studies either provide general statistics on the percentage

of professionals with a background in arts education in relation to the total workforce, or they provide insights into the situation of individual performing arts alumni. The latter often researches their level of 'success', defined as being able to earn a living from activities related to the art they graduated in.

Analysing the available studies shows that vocational music education is often included in the research, however always in combination with other education. Either the studies make no distinction between vocational and higher music education, or they use combined statistics of multiple performing arts courses including dancing, acting and musical performing. Additionally, the labour market studies only include research on alumni and focus mainly on quantitive data. The studies therefore at most create a general overview of the success or relevance of vocational music schools but do not provide insights into the activities of individual students.

2.3 Research on early school leaving (ESL)

One of the challenges at the base of this thesis is the fact that signed vocational music students are at risk of dropping out of school. Therefore, it seems obvious to include studies on ESL-prevention in this thesis. Both in the Netherlands and abroad a lot of studies are available on ESL in general and on ESL within vocational training in specific. Focusing on the Dutch education system, prominent studies include Elffers (2011), Eimers et al. (2017) and Witte, de et al. (2014). These studies provide elaborate analyses of possible factors affecting ESL. These include amongst many others: gender, ethnicity, intelligence, social class, educational background of parents, and class size. Success in the professional field is rarely included as a relevant factor leading to ESL. Analyzing the data in the studies, this appears to be the result of the small share this specific problem has in the total range of factors leading to ESL. This seems to make the problem too limited to deploy substantial resources for research on the topic; aspects with a higher impact on ESL are prioritized. Professional success of students seems more relevant in vocational music education than in other sectors, but the studies provide very limited insights for this study.

2.4 International professional popular music education

Given the context of this study it seems obvious to review (research on) international professional popular music education. This field of study includes two components: public education and private sector education. The first category includes all government-funded education establishments such as universities, colleges and other higher education institutions. Professional music training is predominantly offered by

conservatories that are part of a university or higher education institution. Referred to as conservatories, academy's, colleges or schools depending on the country, they offer music degrees at level EQF$_1$ 6 (Bachelor) and/or EQF 7 (Master). The majority of the conservatories were established to provide education to instrumentalist, composers and musical directors in classical music. Since the second half of the 20$_{th}$ century, institutions have started offering jazz degrees with most jazz programmes being established in the last three decades (Posthuma 2003). The curricula of today's jazz degrees often address elements or styles of popular music as well, though the genre is far from institutionalised. Research by the AEC (2010) and Posthuma (2003) shows that specialised popular music degrees are still rarely seen at conservatoires.

The Dutch vocational schools only provide dedicated popular music degrees and are bound to rules and regulations specific to the Dutch vocational education system. Additionally, the schools offer EQF 4 degrees that fundamentally differ from the conservatories' EQF 6/7 degrees. The conservatories are more focused on mastering an instrument, enabling students to develop themselves as *instrumentalists*. The vocational schools aim at developing popular music *artists* rather than instrumentalist, focusing on aspects such as songwriting, music production, entrepreneurship and concept development in addition to instrumental skills. Additionally, vocational courses lack the research component customary for EQF 6/7 degrees. These aspects impede including a relevant comparison between Dutch vocational music education and international professional music in this thesis.

In addition to government-funded institutions, popular music training is offered by private sector education providers. Well-known internationally operating institutions include Berklee College of Music, Point Blank, Akademie Deutsche Pop/United Pop, and Full Sail. Since these for-profit organisations do not receive government funding their revenue model is generally based on tuition fees. Organisations can have additional sources of income such as sponsorships or the commercial exploitation of their facilities. Although the schools in general are not a part of the formal national education systems, they often offer accredited bachelor and/or master's degrees. The curricula are either accredited by independent entities as seen by for example the Berklee programs that are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Degrees can also be accredited in partnership with formal universities as seen by for example Point Blank offering degrees validated by Middlesex University London.

Although the popular music curricula of the private schools show substantive similarities with the Dutch vocational courses, their relevance for this study is limited.

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1 European Qualification Framework, the European reference framework for national qualification structures.

First of all, the context of this study is Dutch vocational music education, including the specific rules and regulations. With the private schools operating alongside the formal education system, they are not bound to vocational-specific legislation, providing them with more flexibility in customising and personalising their curricula. Secondly, the issues addressed in this thesis are partly the result of an increase in interest from music companies in Dutch vocational music education. One of the key reasons is the size and proven success of the vocational music schools with 1,200 students enrolled in 11 schools. Additionally, the artist development at the vocational schools is government-funded. Private institutions lack these advantages, limiting the relevance of private sector popular music education for this study.

2.5 Literature from adjacent research areas

For this study, signed students are defined as students with an extensive professional practice that coincides with the curriculum. A review of available literature shows that little research is conducted on those students in other sectors. It can be concluded that in other training domains the problem is not present or at least not pressing enough for initiating large-scale research. An exception is seen in the domain of Elite Sport. Several large-scale studies on vocational students successful as a professional sports player have been published in the last decade. Prominent studies such as Felix et al. (2007), Blom and Duijvestijn (2008) and Bottenburg et al. (2012) provide insights into the rules and regulations applicable to these students. More important, the studies include research on individual students and the issue of combine their vocational course with extensive activities outside of school. In addition, several publications such as Schouwenburg (2016) are available describing case studies of schools dealing with these students. This makes Elite Sport a relevant domain to include in this research with a view to exploring the different approaches for formally including professional activities as part of the curriculum.

Literature on education-industry partnerships can also be found in adjoining research areas. Studies on the relevance of vocational curricula in relation to the labour market, for instance, are extensively available. Although the similarities with the topic of this study suggest a certain relevance, applying findings from this literature is problematic. Nationwide studies such as SER (2017b) and Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2016) are often commissioned by the Dutch government and approach vocational education as a whole, relating it to the complete Dutch labour market. When distinguishing specific domains, the majority of the studies focus on the sectors with major shortages of (future) employees. These include logistics, ICT and medical care, the music industry is not identified as a sector in distress. In addition, the research is always policy-driven,

focusing on providing advice to governmental entities or other policymakers. Outcomes on the level of individual schools are limited, insights into the situation of individual students are usually absent.

2.6 Popular Music and Artist & Repertoire

With this study based in the field of popular music, it would seem obvious to include popular music studies in the literature review. Research on career development of pop artists seems particularly relevant, given that the signed students included in this thesis are pursuing a professional career. Reviewing the available literature, however, shows that the studies provide little relevant insights for this specific study. Prominent works such as Frith (1998) and Middleton (1990) review popular music as a cultural phenomenon, primarily addressing the development of the genre and/or the role of popular music in society. Other eminent literature such as Giuffre (1999) and Green (2002) focuses on career- and artist development within popular music, with the all-encompassing and/or longitudinal approaches providing insights in a broad array of aspects affecting the career trajectories of pop musicians. This thesis addresses signed students and their specific issues; these are not included in the abovementioned literature. Additionally, this study focuses on developing a solution for the problem that arises when a pop artist connects a vocational music school with a music company. Since this thesis does not focus on the long-term career development of pop artists, the popular music literature provides little relevant insights. Reviewing the field of popular music, it is, however, relevant to review the developments in the popular music industry contributing to the increase of signed students.

The increase in vocational music students signing to a music company can be reviewed from both the educational and the industrial perspective. First of all, there is the substantial quantitative and qualitative growth of Dutch vocational popular music education that took place during the last decade. Although it is self-evident that such a development has a positive effect on the relevance of the schools for music companies, there is no literature available that directly relates it to the increase of signed students. Alternative research such as the review of anecdotal material is needed therefor. Secondly, developments in the music industry resulting in the increase of signing music students need to be examined. With A&R traditionally being the responsibility of record labels, I initially look at developments affecting these specific companies. Since the core business of record labels is built on master rights, A&R was mainly funded by album sales. Research such as Klembas (2003), Webb (2012) and PwC (2016) provide analyses of the decrease in album sales since the digitalization of the music industry and its effect on A&R. The studies are supported by anecdotal repertoire such as Lindvall (2011) and are included in this study to identify the causes for music companies signing vocational music students. In addition to the research

studies, data on album sales and A&R are provided by the recording industry itself through its industry association International Federation for the Phonographic Industry (IFPI). The IFPI publishes data on the A&R budgets of around 1,300 major and independent record labels, though not on a regular basis. It is, however, hard to interpret their figures since the data also includes marketing and promotion budgets. These budgets are spent on successful as well as emerging artists, not identifying them as scouting and development costs per se. Additionally, figures published by the IFPI should be approached with a certain reservation, since the organisation has an interest in a positive representation of the recording industry. For this reason, publications will always show an interpretation of figures favouring the recording companies. Therefore, I interpret and contextualize the industry's publications using a literature research and the review of anecdotal material. This review will also address A&R activities by companies outside the recording industry such as publishers, bookers and management agencies.

2.7 Summary

Reviewing the available literature shows that little research is done specifically on signed vocational music students. With around 1,200 music students in relation to the national total of over 475,000 students enrolled in vocational education, the training domain comprises 0.3% of students (Inspectie van het Onderwijs 2016). This makes it of little interest for deploying substantial resources to conduct large-scale research. Additionally, the music industry is not considered a labour market with a qualitative or quantitative shortage of employees. Sectors that do show these challenges are more relevant for (semi-)governmental organisations to research. As a result, no nationwide qualitative research is available on vocational music students dropping out, let alone whether this is the result of their success outside of school. In addition, the studies mostly show a policy-driven approach, not including insights into the level of individual students. Therefore, the studies provide little contribution to understanding signed vocational music students and their approaches to combining their industrial and academic activities.

Reviewing research in other training domains shows that Elite Sport is an adjacent research area relevant to include in this thesis. The fact that the research includes cases of individual students dealing with success outside of school provides interesting parallels with the topic of this study. Research conducted on vocational education as a whole is included in this thesis only in the contextualization of the described challenges of signed vocational music students. A similar approach is used for including research on early school leaving and labour market relevance of vocational music education.

3. Methodology

In addition to a literature study, this study is based on my own professional experience developing education-industry partnerships concerning signed music students. The main objective of the research is to identify the key issues for designing these collaborations. This leads to the main research question of this study:

> What are key issues for designing student-centred partnerships between Dutch vocational music schools and music companies?

I explore the design processes of these partnerships by reviewing three case studies drawn from my own professional practice. The cases describe the design of education-industry partnerships concerning signed music students. Since I use the principles of A&R-tool *The Cycle* in designing and/or supervising the partnerships, the case study review includes the effect of using *The Cycle* as a framework for partnership design. The educational context of all case studies is Dutch vocational music education. The subjects of the cases differ with projects around a singer, a DJ/producer and a pop band. The projects cover the three genres that jointly define *popular music* as used within vocational education: pop/rock, electronic music and urban/hip-hop. The analyses of these case studies provide the common characteristics in the design of each collaboration, irrespective of the varying musical genres. Including these common issues in the framework ensures its relevance for any signed vocational popular music student regardless of genre, irrespective of the involved industry partner(s) or academic situation. To ensure the cases provide all insights relevant to the research objective, the case studies are reviewed using a framework designed following the guidelines as described by Yin (2009).

Reviewing and discussing available research methods, I have found the case study analysis most appropriate and effective for this study. First of all, case studies in general are the preferred method when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin 2009, p.2). Yin elaborates that "you would use the case study method because you wanted to understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions" (Yin 2009, p.18). This demonstrates that case study analysis as an appropriate methodology, with the phenomenon of an education-industry partnership concerning a signed student heavily influenced by the context of Dutch vocational music education and the music industry. Second of all, this study aims to provide insights in my personal strategy for developing education-industry partnerships. A case study review designed following the guidelines by Yin (2009) provides a framework for objectively and effectively reviewing my

professional practice, ensuring a clear distinction between me as the professional within the case studies and me as the academic researcher reviewing them. A more in-depth description of the strategy for data collection and analysis is provided in Chapter 8.1.

Based on my findings from the literature review and the case study review, the research includes the development of two handbooks. These documents describe the framework developed throughout this study and provide insights into how to apply the framework in practice. The first handbook is written for professionals working in an educational context such as a teacher, coordinator, study-supervisor or tutor. The handbook provides a step-by-step plan on how the music academy could work within and benefit from a student-centred partnership. Additionally, the handbook includes an overview of the music industry to ensure the reader's knowledge of the sector is sufficient for working within an education-industry a partnership.

The second handbook is to be used by music industry professionals, who in general have limited knowledge of vocational (music) education. The handbook therefore includes an introduction to the Dutch vocational education system, curricula, quality frameworks and other relevant aspects of music education. Additionally, it describes a step-by-step plan focusing on the role of the music company in the design and execution of the partnership.

To ensure that the handbooks present the key issues for developing student-centred partnerships as effectively as possible, their content and form are tailored to the specific target groups. This includes amongst other things the form and structure of the documents, their look and feel, the language/register used, and the content being adapted to the reader's expected knowledge on Dutch vocational music education and the music industry. In order to make well-informed decisions on these topics, they are included in the design of the framework for case study review.

The case study review and the development of the handbooks jointly create the practical fundament of this study. As concluded reviewing available literature, the contextualization of this practice cannot solely rely on a literature review. Therefore, in addition to a literature review, I contextualize my practice through a number of interviews with professionals in Dutch vocational education. This contextual research examines current practices of vocational music schools dealing with signed students. Practical problems for these students include limited availability of time due to professional activities and formal rules and regulations imposed by the vocational institution and/or the inspectorate. These aspects are similar for all signed Dutch vocational students regardless of their training domains. Therefore, other study domains are included in the research to identify good practices of student-led partnerships within the whole of Dutch vocational education system.

4. Dutch vocational music education

4.1 The Dutch education system

The Dutch public education system consists of the consecutive levels of primary education, secondary education and professional education/university. Vocational music education is part of professional education, in Dutch called *mbo* (Dutch: middelbaar beroepsonderwijs). Educational institutions providing vocational education are called *ROC*'s (Dutch: regionaal opleidingscentrum). Today, 11 ROC's offer vocational music studies:

- Albeda College, Rotterdam (*AMP*)
- Arcus College, Heerlen
- Deltion College, Zwolle
- MBO Utrecht, Utrecht (*Herman Brood Academie*)
- Noorderpoort College, Groningen
- Rijn IJssel, Arnhem
- Friesland College, Leeuwarden
- ROC Midden Nederland, Utrecht (*Nederlandse Pop Academie*)
- ROC van Amsterdam, Amsterdam (*PACT Amsterdam*)
- ROC Twente, Almelo
- Summa College, Eindhoven (*Rock City Institute* and *Metal Factory)*

There are five levels of vocational education: *entreeopleiding*, *basisberoepsopleiding*, *vakopleiding*, *middenkaderopleiding* and *specialistenopleiding*. Popular music studies are always *middenkader* studies spanning three academic years. Students enrolled in these courses need to spend a total of 3,000 hours minimum on their course in three years. The Dutch government has formulated restrictions on how these hours should be distributed. In three years, a student is required to spend a minimum of:

- 1,800 hours (of which a minimum of 700 in the first academic year) in a classroom and/or working on assignments/projects under the supervision of a certified teacher: 'begeleide onderwijstijd' (BOT-hours);
- 900 hours working in the professional field, possibly as an intern: 'beroepspraktijkvorming' (BPV-hours);
- 300 hours doing homework and/or working on assignments/projects on their own. Schools can also choose to add these hours to BOT or BPV.

Each vocational school can individually decide on the distribution of the hours over the three years; it can also choose to offer more hours than needed. Most popular music studies choose to offer most BOT-hours in the first two years and most BPV-hours in the final year. An example of a common distribution of hours is the vocational popular music course of the Arcus College as seen in Figure 1.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	*Total*
BOT	900	872	315	*2,087*
BPV	160	160	630	*950*
free	150	150	150	*450*
Total	*1,210*	*1,182*	*1,095*	*3,487*

Figure 1: Arcus College's distribution of hours over three academic years for their Popular Music course. Adapted from the Arcus Popular Music Curriculum Overview 2016/2017 (Arcus College 2016).

Figure 1 shows that the Arcus College initially plans more hours than required: 3,487 instead of 3,000. Most schools create a similar buffer, knowing that various circumstances will lead to a loss of hours. MBO Raad (2014) describes some common reasons: a loss of lessons in the first and last week(s) of the academic year, weeks including meetings or seminars for all faculty, examination weeks and illness of teaching staff. Creating a buffer by initially planning additional hours is permitted; planning less than the 3,000 hours is only permitted if the school can "demonstrate that this [adjustment] is based on an educational vision on quality" (MBO Raad 2014, p.9). Permission can be granted after an elaborate process during which the effect of the proposed adjustment on the quality of the course is reviewed. The Executive Board and the Student Council of the vocational institute play an important role in this review as well. No vocational school is known to have filed such a request for a popular music course to date.

4.2 Vocational qualification structure

Every vocational course is registered with its own *crebo*-number, being 25497 for popular music. For each crebo-number, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science publishes *Qualification Documents* (QD) through its education-industry cooperation *SBB*. These documents describe the skills and knowledge students needs to develop during their study, including the level required for graduation. Each vocational school offering popular music needs to structure its curriculum in a way that ensures the student sufficiently developing the skills in the QD during the three academic years. The QD describes the skills and knowledge using *kerntaken* (core tasks) and the more specific *werkprocessen* (work processes).
The QD describing the popular music course also includes the courses Acting, Musical

performing, and Dancing. Several qualifications apply to all four courses as described in general qualifications for creative professionals. Other skills and qualifications are profile specific. For popular music (profile 3) the QD is described as follows with **B** being a general qualification, **P** a profile specific qualification, **K** a core task, and **W** a work process (SBB 2015, p.5):

B1-K1: Shows artistic proficiency
>   B1-K1-W1: Develops professional competence and distinctiveness
>   B1-K1-W2: Evaluates and reflects on his artistic proficiency

B1-K2: Positions himself as a professional artist and organises his own (net)work
>   B1-K2-W1: Develops and maintains a professional network
>   B1-K2-W2: Positions himself and his product in the industry
>   B1-K2-W3: Closes deals and takes care of financial administration
>   B1-K2-W4: Performs educational activities

P3-K1: Creates or performs music for a music production
>   P3-K1-W1: Develops a musical product
>   P3-K1-W2: Presents a musical product

For each aspect, the required level of skills and/or knowledge is described. As an example, this looks as follows for P3-K1:

<u>P3-K1: Creates or performs music for a music production</u>
The professional pop musician:
- possesses in-depth knowledge of processes related to teamwork and collaboration;
- is able to research frame of references in relevant market segments;
- is able to identify business opportunities in relevant market segments;
- can take care of his own instruments and/or (technical) equipment;
- oversees logistics and technical infrastructure at the concerning location;
- is able to deliver a musical performance in regard to technique and/or timing and/or dynamics and/or articulation and/or sound and/or rhythm and/or pulse;
- can deliver a convincing musical contribution;
- is able to add his own artistic signature when creating and/or presenting a musical product individually or collaboratively;
- is able to choose and use the relevant professional skills and technique when creating and/or presenting a musical product;
- is able to musically communicate when creating and/or presenting musical products.

4.3 Curricula

The curricula of vocational studies consist of two components. First of all, there are four general courses that are the same for each Dutch vocational student in all training domains: Dutch Language, English Language, Mathematics/Economics, and Citizenship/Social Science. Secondly, there are the courses and projects preparing the students for their specific future field of work. These are the courses developing the skills and knowledge as described in the Qualification Documents. Every ROC can develop its own curriculum, as long as it corresponds with the core tasks and work processes in the applicable QD. Although all vocational music curricula include theoretical and practical components, the ratio differs between institutions. Review of the curricula of all vocational music schools provides the outline and content of a general vocational popular music course:

1. GENERAL
- Dutch Language;
- English Language;
- Mathematics/Economics;
- Citizenship/Social Science.

2. MUSIC SPECIFIC (theory and/or practice)
- music theory and solfege;
- history of (popular) music;
- music business / entrepreneurship;
- music technology (studio and live);
- music production;
- band coaching;
- instrumental lessons;
- songwriting;
- didactic training.

The subjects provide knowledge and/or training directly or indirectly preparing students for specific core tasks or work processes. Music history, for instance, provides students with a broader understanding of (popular) music and the arts, genre development, popular culture and style characteristics. Although this does not correspond directly to a core task or work process, the knowledge can be applied to subjects such as songwriting and music production. A subject such as songwriting however is closely linked to the work process *P3-K1-W1: Develops a musical product*. The subjects jointly create a balanced and coherent curriculum preparing the students for graduation and subsequently for a career in the music industry.

4.4 Examination

The requirements for students to graduate from a vocational popular music study consist of three components:

1. Fulfilment of formal practicalities
    a. minimum of 1,800 BOT-hours spent;
    b. minimum of 900 BPV-hours spent;
    c. minimum of 1,000 hours spent each academic year;
    d. total minimum of 3,000 hours spent.

2. Completion of general courses
    a. Dutch Language graded 'sufficient' or higher;
    b. English Language graded 'sufficient' or higher;
    c. Mathematics/Economics graded 'sufficient' or higher;
    d. Citizenship/Social Science graded 'sufficient' or higher.

3. Demonstration of professional standards
    a. final examination of artistic development and musical/instrumental/artistical
    proficiency is graded sufficient or higher.

Each component is individually checked or examined:

1. Fulfilment of formal practicalities

Based on the curriculum and a student's timetables for the three academic years, the number of scheduled BOT-hours can be calculated. All vocational schools keep record of a student's presence during each class; any missed hours are subtracted from the total amount. Extracting the hours lost by faculty meetings, teacher illness, etc. as well, provides the total of BOT-hours spent by the student in three years.

BPV-hours cannot be accredited by the vocational school itself since these hours are by definition spent on activities outside the curriculum, not supervised by teaching staff. BPV-hours can only be formally approved by companies accredited as Approved Training Companies by aforementioned government entity SBB. This structure makes perfect sense in training domains where students go out to work as an intern for a company operating in their future field of work. In those cases, the student simply functions as an employee of the company for a fixed number of hours for several weeks or months. Being under the supervision of an assigned supervisor within the company, the spent BPV-hours are easily registered and communicated to the academy. With the future field of work being the music industry, such a scenario is not realistic for music students:

> "Artists search for creative solutions to survive in a market where supply and demand match laborious. A combined and hybrid professional practice is more often the rule than the exception." (SER 2017a, p.87)

Vocational music studies alumni will usually work on a constantly varying portfolio of projects. Employers vary from bands to recording studios, and from synchronization agencies to individual artists. To match their future field of work as closely as possible, BPV-hours are spent on different projects with varying employers as well. A student's BPV-portfolio developed during three academic years usually consists of a high number of venues and festivals where they performed and might also include for instance a studio where they spent three weeks as an engineering intern, a band for which they recorded an album and a radio station for which they produced a new jingle. Following the official guidelines for the approval of BPV-hours, all these companies/bands should be Approved Training Companies and a BPV-contract should be signed for each individual project. Since this has proven not to be feasible in practice, vocational music schools organise the approval of BPV-hours through organisations combining all the BPV-hours distributed over several companies and projects into one formal 'internship'. These organisations are either genuine companies, or entities founded by the schools themselves though operating individually as production companies, booking agencies and/or record labels.

The total amount of hours is not checked by the inspectorate before graduation, it does however conduct regular audits at the vocational schools. If during these audits the school cannot prove the fulfilment of the 3,000 hours, the diploma can be declared invalid with retroactive effect.

2. Completion of general courses

For the subjects Dutch Language, English Language and Mathematics/Economics, vocational schools need to use the final exams developed by the governmental College for Tests and Exams. Additionally, schools examine students in the preceding years with tests and/or practical assignments. The results of these exams on average needs to be graded a minimum of 6 on a scale of 10 for graduation.

3. Demonstration of professional standards

Students showcase their artistic and professional development with the practical final exam. Schools can either use the centrally developed exam or develop their own, as long as it covers the complete Qualification Document. The final exam consists of several smaller components that all test the student's level of one or more specific core tasks or work processes. Therefore, the final exams of the 11 schools only differ on details; in general, they all resemble the centrally developed final exam as seen in Figure 2.

Exam 1: BOR (Prove of Development and Reflection)	
Description	Develop a document including an evaluation of the first two academic years and a description of future goals.
Work process(es)	B1-K1-W2: Evaluates and reflects on his artistic proficiency

Exam 2: Workshop	
Description	Develop and perform a workshop
Work process(es)	B1-K2-W4: Performs educational activities.

Exam 3: Cultural Entrepreneurship	
Description	1. Perform a sales pitch for the workshop of exam 2; 2. Showcase your proficiency in financial administration; 3. Written test on entrepreneurship and recording/performing rights.
Work process(es)	B1-K2-W3: Closes deals and takes care of financial administration

Exam 4: Creating	
Description	1. Develop a concept for a musical product; 2. Develop the concept into a musical artefact (recorded and/or live).
Work process(es)	P3-K1-W1: Develops a musical product

Exam 5: Presenting	

Description	Present the musical artefact during
	    1. a try-out;
	    2. a final presentation.

Work process(es)	P3-K1-W2: Presents a musical product

Exam 6: Portfolio presentation	
Description	1. Develop a portfolio of all your activities/projects during your study; 2. Present your portfolio in the final interview with the exam committee.
Work process(es)	B1-K1-W1: Develops professional competence and distinctiveness B1-K2-W1: Develops and maintains a professional network B1-K2-W2: Positions himself and his product in the industry

Figure 2: Summary of the final exam for vocational popular music courses. Adapted and translated from Dutch from the National Final Exam Popular Music (Bureau ICE 2016).

The criteria for determining if a student has developed each specific work process sufficiently are described in the assessment protocol accompanying the final exam. All six exams have their own assessment forms to be used by the exam committees, grading the core tasks and work processes following their descriptions in the Qualification Document.

5. Developments in Artist & Repertoire

For decades, finding and developing new pop artists has been the domain of record labels. Their A&R departments would continuously develop several artists simultaneously, both musically/artistically and in the area of marketing and promotion. Not all of them would become successful artists, but the development costs for all artists were recouped several times over by the few that became successful. With A&R being carried out by record labels, it was predominantly funded by album sales. In the last decade, this income from physical album sales globally has decreased from over $13 billion in 2011 to around $7.5 billion in 2017 (PwC 2016, p.2). With income from digital music currently only slightly compensating this decrease, it is obvious that this development has had a big impact on artist development. It is however impossible to track down the exact budgets spent on A&R nowadays since sector-wide data is not available. The International Federation for the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) publishes combined data of around 1,300 major and independent record labels, though not on a regular basis. In their 2014 report, they estimate that "the industry invested some US$4.3 billion worldwide in artists and repertoire (A&R), marketing and promotion" (IFPI 2014, p.6). It is however hard to interpret the figure since it also includes marketing and promotion budgets. These budgets are spent on established as well as emerging artists, not identifying them as scouting and development costs per se. Additionally, the figure only takes into account the amount spent by record labels, not including A&R budgets from, for instance, publishers. In general, figures published by the IFPI should be approached with a certain reservation, since the organisation has an interest in a positive representation of the recording industry. Therefore, it seems probable publications will always show an interpretation of figures favouring the recording companies.

In addition to the record industry, investing in artist development has always been a part of the publishing industry. An early form of A&R dates back to the 19th century, before the invention of recorded music (Napier-Bell 2014). With the music sector mainly organised around sheet music at that time, publishers were the leading companies of the music industry. The publishers needed songs to print and sell as sheet music, so they continuously discovered and developed new talented songwriters. With the invention of the phonograph in 1877, recorded music quickly grew to dominate the music industry resulting in the rise of record labels (Napier-Bell 2014). With their market share increasing with the growth of the recording industry, the record labels overtook the publishers in their role of finding and developing new musical talent. The publishers however continued investing in A&R and are still doing so today. For a comparison

between artist development budgets of labels and publishers we review A&R investments in the UK, one of the world's largest music markets (PwC 2016). The trade body of the UK music industry *UK Music* states in its 2015 report that record labels spent approximately £178 million on A&R in 2014 (UK Music 2015, p.5). The 2014 investment in A&R by publishers is estimated at £162 million, a difference of just 10%. However, record labels reportedly also spent £157 on marketing and promotion, which could (partly) be labeled as A&R spendings as well. Either way, the investment of publishers in new talent in today's music industry is substantial. These A&R expenditures naturally only directly benefit songwriters and composers since the publishers' business model is based on the exploitation of copyrights.

Over the last years the live music industry has shown a steady growth as opposed to the decrease in the market for recorded music. This has affected the role of booking agencies in the development of artist careers. Traditionally agencies were not involved in artist development in an early stage of an artist's career. Quoted in Brooks (2013) Mike Dungan, CEO at Universal Music Group Nashville, explains:

> "It used to be that agents were the last guys an artist brought in. […] It was usually the label that would go to a booking agent of their choice and say 'we really think we got something here, will you book their tour?'." (Dungan, quoted in Brooks 2013)

This has changed with the live sector gaining importance in today's music industry: "Now what I've noticed is that (agents) come to me first (with new bands), before my A&R Departments." (Dungan, quoted in Brooks 2013). The difference with labels and publishers is that agencies usually do not make a financial investment in an artist. Steve Lassiter, Partner at APA Agency, acknowledges this and explains:

> "What we do hand over is manpower. It costs us a lot of money to have these developing acts because of the staff it takes to work with them." (Lassiter, quoted in Brooks 2013)

This makes the in-kind investment of agencies hard to capitalize, but it has clearly increased with the growth of the live music industry.

In addition to record labels, publishers and booking agencies, companies such as management agencies, artist collectives and even live venues invest in artist development. These investments may be significant for individual artists and/or companies, they are, however, trivial on a global scale. Although no industry-wide hard data is available on budgets spent on artist development nowadays and in relation to the past, it is clear that the decrease in album sales has resulted in a decrease of A&R budgets. This is supported by sector-wide research from Klembas (2003) and Webb (2012), and anecdotal repertoire such as Lindvall (2011). With PwC predicting physical album sales to drop further to just over $5

billion in 2020 (PwC 2016, p.2), it is obvious that the music industry is constantly reviewing its A&R funding mechanism. The sector has already shown the most obvious measures such as cost reductions but is also on the lookout for alternative funding sources. Dutch vocational music education, for this reason, has proven to be an area of great interest since it is primarily funded by the Dutch government. This means the 11 schools can jointly be seen as a huge, government-funded A&R department, constantly developing around 1,200 popular music artists. In addition, dozens of vocational music alumni have become successful artists, proving that the courses meet music industry standards. This combination of quantity, proven quality and government funding, explains the growing interest of music companies in Dutch vocational music education.

6. Signed vocational students

For this research, *signed students* are defined as students that get involved with a music company while still enrolled in a music course. Students having difficulties combining their professional practice with their course is not a completely new phenomenon. Vocational music schools have been developing strategies to deal with these cases ever since their establishment in the early 2000s. The situation occurs in training domains other than the music industry as well. Vocational academies have developed different approaches on how to deal with a student's work outside of school.

6.1 Including professional activities in the curriculum

The curricula consisting of at least 3,000 academic hours and the corresponding full schedules leave little room for structural activities outside of school. Students for which this is known to be a big challenge, are students pursuing a career as a professional sports player. For these talented sports players such as ice skaters, football players, swimmers and hockey players, there is no vocational course preparing them for their specific sports. The courses they are enrolled in therefore range from business administration to logistics. These students need to combine the curriculum of their course with extensive training schedules including up to several hours of daily training. Without adjustments in the curriculum, successfully combining the two would be impossible. Research by Felix et al. (2007), Blom and Duijvestijn (2008) and Bottenburg et al. (2012) describes some of the most important factors for successfully combining elite sports with a vocational course. These include flexible class schedules, exemption of classes for training and matches abroad, the possibility of rescheduling tests/exams, more flexibility concerning BPV in relation to the sport and the availability of online/distance learning facilities. Vocational schools have the possibility to provide curriculum customisation for this specific group of students by making use of legislation designed for (future) professional sports players: the *Elite Sports Regulation*. Academies can be licensed as an *Elite Sports Talent School* by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, exempting them from offering the required academic hours. They are only allowed to do so for students that are given the status of *Elite Sports Player* or *Elite Sports Talent* by national sports federation NOC*NSF. The rules and regulations provide the schools with more flexibility concerning the student's curriculum, given that the quality of education must be guaranteed at all times. This enables the academies to offer students the opportunity to tailor their classes to their training schedules. Education manager Joop De Kleijn implements this curriculum customisation for sports

players at ROC Nijmegen. Quoted in Schouwenberg (2016) he explains how the theory works in practice:

> "Not the curriculum of the school, but the personal agenda of the student is leading. Students need to be able to align the classes with their training schedule and therefore they need to determine for themselves when they attend which class. We use as many resources as possible, such as ICT and intensive coaching, to support the students in their planning." (De Kleijn, quoted in Schouwenberg 2016, p.73)

De Kleijn explains further that every class is scheduled multiple times a week to enable students to align their curriculum with their training schedules. Students can choose which class fits their schedule best. Additionally, classes never take longer than 30 minutes and are always recorded and published in an online learning environment. This also enables students staying abroad for training or competition to follow the classes. De Kleijn indicates that no additional resources are needed to arrange the education in such a flexible way. By using substantial online resources, housing costs are for example lower than for a regular vocational course. Aforementioned studies on the combination of elite sports and vocational education show a similar implementation of the legislation at other ROCs.

Vocational music education shows a similar problem concerning the required academic hours. The courses are developed as full-time studies, with the class schedules leaving little room for external activities. For vocational music academies, no legislation is available similar to the Elite Sports Regulation. Therefore, they in principle cannot deviate from the requirements applicable to the academic hours and BPV completion. This leaves schools with more limited formal possibilities than Elite Sports Talent Schools for creating space in the agenda of signed students. Adjusting class schedules to fit the agenda of the involved music company therefore is difficult, although formal policies do not seem to be the most prominent impeding factor. Sjoerd Rutten, coordinator of the Arcus College popular music course, about the possibilities within the regulations: "These possibilities [for curriculum customisation] are absolutely there, but someone should get the time to deal with it creatively and design a tailor-made program." (Rutten 2018). Arjo van Nieuwamerongen, education manager at Albeda College, endorses this view, adding that the impeding factor is more to be found at the individual education professional than in rules, regulations, or policies (Nieuwamerongen, van 2017). Another factor negatively affecting anticipating on industry activities is the fact that music companies do not take the school into account when planning activities with the student. With the students choosing the industry activities over the classes/projects, they simply miss out on a substantial number of classes. Thijs Lodewijk, course leader at the Herman Brood Academie, underwrites that

it is very difficult for a school to instantly subvene when a practical issue occurs (Lodewijk 2017). He elaborates: "A clear [industrial] plan to anticipate on as a school is often lacking. Usually it is simply: "we are now just going for it", and a lot of things then happen unpremeditated." A detailed development plan describing all professional activities for the months to come would enable academies to (better) adapt to a company's plan.

6.2 Curriculum customisation

Adjusting the class schedule to a student's professional agenda does not by definition create a substantive merger of the activities as well. Although the result of the curriculum customisation might be a singular agenda including both academic and professional activities, this does not necessarily mean that they are considered a substantive part of the curriculum. At most Elite Sports Talent Schools this is not considered an issue since the curriculum and the professional plan do not substantively interfere. The profession for which the course is preparing the student, by definition differs from the sports career the student is pursuing outside of school. A course developing students for a specific sport simply does not exist. The only vocational sports course available focuses on professions such as instructor, trainer/coach and fitness specialist, as described by Pelsser and Schipper-van Veldhoven (2012, p.16-17). Therefore, there is no need for a substantive merger since the curricula do not interfere with the elite sports activities. There are however procedures for including any professional activities as part of the curriculum. These provide in the supervision and/or grading of certain activities in the professional field, thereby including them as an official part of the curriculum. This predominantly focuses on the general subjects, for example by grading an international press conference as a substitute assignment for an oral test in English Language. Although these are individual cases not embedded in legislation or formal policies, it can be considered one of the solutions for including professional work in the curriculum.

In vocational music education, structural long-term student-centred collaborations between schools and companies are never seen. Solutions to the various issues are incidental and case specific. Schools for example constantly seek (new) possibilities for accrediting industry activities as internship hours, but with the applying rules and regulations for official internships this is not always a feasible option. In principle not being able to deviate from the required academic hours leaves the schools with limited formal possibilities. Helping a signed student therefore sometimes simply includes accepting certain deficiencies and making optimal use of the buffer of academic hours.

The academies describe curriculum customisation as a key to solving the majority of issues but add that this in general is challenging. Van Nieuwamerongen: "As a school we are often not well capable of offering an adjusted program […] because in education we are still educating in fixed structures." In addition to this organisational issue, rescheduling classes has substantive implications. Lodewijk: "Curricula are fixed and provide in constructive and continuous series of lessons." Replacing content of a specific class disrupts the coherent series of classes and thereby the continuous and logical built-up of the curriculum. Additionally, the collectivity of the courses is a limiting factor. Individualisation of the curriculum is a challenge since it needs to provide in the development of several students simultaneously. Matching class content to a specific student is only justified when that content is relevant for all of these students. Schools therefore need to be very careful in providing specific students with exemptions or privileges to avoid inequality in the education offered to all students.

6.3 The student's motivation

The schools being unable to optimally cater to the needs of a signed student results in another major challenge: keeping the student motivated for their course. For a music student, signing to a label, bookings agency or publisher is exciting. It is a confirmation that their music is potentially good enough for a sustainable professional career and it is a next step into the music industry. Working with the company will generally open new doors and is considered 'the real deal', resulting in students feeling "too big for the school" (Lodewijk 2017). The curricula provide in the development of skills and knowledge that may not directly benefit a student's professional activities. Lodewijk: "A student can not envision that the school can provide in the development of skills he may not need at this point but will be of use later in his career." As an example, Lodewijk describes the situation of a student's successful band breaking up, causing the student to get involved with other projects demanding different skills. This long-term development, based on a broad skill set, is exactly what the curricula are designed to provide in. Not feeling the need for developing these skills results in a lack of motivation for the vocational course.

6.4 Summary

Based on the review of current approaches to dealing with signed students, I define two types of problems: *practical challenges* and *substantive issues*. Vocational schools are obligated to provide their students with the opportunity to fulfil the minimal requirements for graduation. Students that have not spent 3,000 hours during their three

years of study, in principle cannot graduate even if they demonstrably possess the skill- and knowledge levels required for graduation. This creates a practical problem when students get actively involved with the music industry. Schools need to plan a minimum of 1,000 hours in an academic year that spans a maximum of 40 weeks. This generally results in students having 20-30 hours of mandatory classes each week. This leaves little flexibility for students to plan activities with industrial partners, especially when these activities cover a longer period of time such as a studio recording or an international tour. Choosing the industrial activities and thus missing out on classes, the student is at risk of not fulfilling the formally required number of academic hours. Additionally, missing classes might have substantive consequences, since it might be a challenge to develop the relevant knowledge to the required level.

Furthermore, music academies are organised to develop dozens of students simultaneously. This makes customising curricula and class schedules of specific students difficult. Providing extra attention or support to a specific student is hard for a school to organise. Not only does a school have limited resources to provide extra coaching, it should also provide equal learning conditions to all students at the academy. Providing extra support for particular students creates inequality amongst students, which in principle is not accepted by the inspectorate.

Another practical problem is the discrepancy of the calendars the educational and industrial partner work with. The school year of a Dutch music academy covers September up and until June and is divided into semesters or quarters. All projects, lessons and tests are organised within this framework and are planned at least one academic year ahead. A music company does not work with school years or semesters, making it difficult to align long-term plans. In addition, last-minute (promotional) performances or rehearsals are not uncommon in the music industry. This 'offhand' approach interferes with the school planning activities a year ahead.

In addition to these practical issues, signed students are to encounter challenges I define as *substantive issues*. Vocational music curricula are developed in accordance with the Qualification Document, designed to serve all possible students regardless of genre and intended future professional practice. This results in broad-based curricula providing students with skills and knowledge in a wide variety of music industry segments. Additionally, students participate in projects around a broad range of popular music genres during the three academic years. Furthermore, the curricula are designed to develop the students as versatile musicians, based on the vision that this increases their chances in the labour market. Therefore, they will develop a broad set of skills and knowledge including songwriting, music technology, performing, educational activities and music business amongst many other things. A student's activities in collaboration with a music company is less diversified, focusing on specific goals. The development

plan working towards these goals will only include the specific skills and knowledge needed for this plan, tailored to the artist. This in-depth and focused development plan does not organically merge with the broad-based curriculum, leaving the student with two separate plans for their musical development.

Solving these practical challenges and the substantive issues related to the mismatch of the academic and professional plan provides the student with a single development plan. This solves the issue of a student feeling the need to choose between the course and the professional activities. It has shown to be tempting for the student to completely focus on their collaboration with the company, feeling less motivated for the course. Merging the academic and the professional plan solves this challenge as well.

7. *The Cycle*

7.1 Introduction

For the development of a framework for partnership design, I propose to include elements of *The Cycle*. This A&R-tool developed by music company Dox Records is a model for translating an artistic vision on an artist's career into a concrete artist development plan (Dox Records, 2019). It consists of three consecutive phases, capturing every aspect of an artist's work:

- Phase 1: **Writing**
- Phase 2: **Recording**
- Phase 3: **Performing**

The phases also divide the music industry into three sectors relating to all activities and revenue sources of a specific phase. This creates the overview of the sector as used in Chapter 1.2 (The Real Band 2015):

1. *Writing* music results in *compositions* that create the revenue source **copyright**;
2. *Recording* music results in *recordings* that hold **master- and neighbouring rights**;
3. *Performing* music results in *shows* with which artists earn **performance fees**.

Each revenue source creates a subdivision of the music industry:

1. Writing = copyright = **publishing industry**
2. Recording = master- and neighboring rights = **recording industry**
3. Performing = performance fees = **live industry**

Together these subdivisions include all possible music companies. Note that this overview only includes the core divisions of the music industry ecosystem organised around the revenue sources linked to the three possible musical products. Companies operating in adjacent areas such as merchandise are not included.

Using the three phases, an artist's activities can be structured following the division of the music sector:

Phase 1: Writing
A self-composing artist develops their repertoire in phase 1 by songwriting/composing. The songs/tracks/compositions/beats/etc. are the audible result of an artistic vision, concept or idea. This vision also is the foundation for the recording, marketing, etc. Phase 1 therefore not only produces the music that will be recorded and/or performed, it also determines directions for several processes and activities in the upcoming phases.

Phase 2: Recording

For repertoire to generate revenue it has to be played on media or live on stage. To enable the first thing to happen, the music will be recorded in phase 2. The suitable production process, location, equipment, crew, etc. depends on the artist and the music. The recording phase also includes mixing and mastering, and preparing the recording(s) for release and distribution. The release of the music (whether being a single track or a full album) marks the end of phase 2. Note that in genres such as electronic music and hip-hop, the border between writing and recording is blurry. One could say that when producing e.g. a dance-track, it is written and recorded simultaneously.

Phase 3: Performing

Having written and possibly recorded the music, the potential value of it can be unlocked by making it public in phase 3. Firstly by making it available on digital platforms and in physical shops, secondly by performing it live on stage. The phase also includes marketing of the release and promotion of performances.

7.2 *The Cycle* as a framework

The Cycle is based on the idea that for an artist to develop a sustainable career, it should be developed as a coherent unity of the three phases. Bart Suèr, director of Dox Records and developer of *The Cycle*:

> "It is our policy to say [to our artists]: make sure you make the three revenue sources into a unity and never develop them individually. Always join them into a single project." (Suèr 2013)

Having artists approach their careers according to this vision enables them to identify missing elements of their plans or activities. Additionally, it enables a substantive discussion about their career path. Non-composing artists, for example, do not generate any copyrights, so they need to be aware of the fact they are missing out on one of the revenue sources. Additionally, they have to develop a strategy for including phase 1 into their plans, since they will need compositions to record and/or perform. This means their career includes elements for which they are (partially) dependent on others. The opposite occurs with non-performing songwriters. They rely on other artists to record and/or perform their music live on stage in order for the copyrights to generate revenue. Artists need to have an overview of all these elements in order to develop their ideas about their careers into an integral vision including all revenue sources and related activities. Based on this vision a concrete plan can be developed, creating a coherent and continuous set of activities. Addressing *The Cycle* as a framework for the development of such a plan, two variants can be identified. First of all, it can be used as a timeline for the chronological planning of activities, using the phases as

consecutive periods of time. Secondly, *The Cycle* can be used as a substantial division of the music industry using the activities and revenue sources related to the three phases. In the first variant, the phases include concrete *to-dos*. In the second variant, the phases include descriptions of the concepts and artistic direction of elements related to the phase. The combination of these descriptions per phase provide the overall vision on the career. The concrete elaboration and execution of these concepts are not necessarily planned in the same phase as its description. For example, phase 1 provides descriptions and the direction of various activities in phase 2 and 3. Suèr explains that this is caused by the nature of activities in phase 1:

> "Then [in phase 1] you are working on your artistic message. This not only is the foundation of beautiful songs, but it's also the foundation for the right recording and the right marketing. Because that first phase […] also contains the DNA of the audience for the music. So implicitly you will also have a marketing plan in your head." (Suèr 2013)

When using *The Cycle* as a framework it is essential to distinguish the specific variant to apply in order to comprehensively plan activities and to enable effective communication.

The Cycle is included in this research for multiple reasons. It is a straightforward model of which one quickly understands the basic concept, yet as a framework it is all-encompassing. Additionally, it is used by music company Dox Records where it has proven to be an effective A&R-tool planning the careers of their artists. Most importantly, the model can be used to translate an artistic vision on an artist's career into a concrete artist development plan. This occurs in the music industry as well as in vocational music education, resulting in the A&R plan and the curriculum respectively. These can be considered the concrete artist development plans based on the organisations' visions on the development of the artist/student. With the substantive discrepancy of these two plans being one of the core issues for signed vocational music students, it is addressed as one of the key aspects for which this study aims to identify a possible solution.

8. Case studies

8.1 Case study review strategy

The aim of the case study review is to identify the key issues for developing a framework for student-centred partnerships between Dutch vocational music schools and music companies. To ensure the outcome of the reviews to directly address the main research question, I define *units of analysis* as described by Yin (2009, p.29). These need to provide insights on two levels.

First of all, the cases are reviewed on the level of the signed student for which the partnership is designed. The literature study and the review of vocational education in Chapter 6 provide the two types of issues for signed vocational music students: practical and substantive. Both issues are addressed in the review of the cases, also including the solutions used to solve them. This enables the cases to provide insights into the issues that the framework needs to solve and the possible solutions that it needs to include.

Secondly, the cases are reviewed on the level of the partnership between the school and the company. This includes the framework used to create the collaboration (if applicable) and aspects concerning implementation. Proposing the principles of *The Cycle* as a basis for the development of a framework for partnership design, the A&R-model is included in the case study review on the level of the partnership. My working method for designing, implementing, executing and/or supervising the partnerships includes elements of *The Cycle*. The case studies therefore provide an analysis of the application of those principles to the design and implementation of the collaboration. In addition to identifying key issues for the development of the framework, the cases provide insights into how the framework should be presented in order to be effectively implemented by the involved school and company. The review of the cases on the level of the partnership thus provides insights into the *content* of the framework as well as the *form* of the handbooks presenting it.

Given the above, I define the units of analysis and corresponding sub-questions for the case study review as follows:

1. Student

      1a. What practical challenges occur?

      1b. What substantive issues occur?

      1c. What solutions are used to solve the issues?

2. Partnership

     2a. What framework (if any) is used for the design of the partnership?

     2b. How does the use of *The Cycle* affect the design of the partnership?

     2c. What are notable issues affecting the design of the partnership?

The cases included in this study are drawn from my own professional experience designing and/or supervising partnerships between vocational music schools and music companies. The analyses are based on my own observations whilest involved in the design of the partnerships. The framework I develop as part of the practical element of this study should be applicable to all signed vocational music students, regardless of their genre. Therefore, I select my cases based on the definition of popular music as provided in Chapter 2.1. With three genres distinguished at Dutch vocational music schools, I review three projects with each case covering one of the genres. This enables me to comprehensively review the units of analysis as described, identifying transcending aspects found across all genres.

Using the case study analysis, I review my work developing education-industry partnerships. This is limited to the framework I use for designing them; no other aspects of my professional workflow, procedures, communication or attitude are addressed in this study. This enables a clear distinction between me as the professional within the case studies, and me as the researcher reviewing the design strategy. The process for data collection and analysis based on the case study review is as follows, including me as a *practitioner* in step 1 and as a *researcher* in steps 2-5:

1. Developing the partnership in collaboration with all stakeholders, I take notes of all meetings and other relevant activities. At this stage I am part of the project as *practitioner*. The notes taken during these meetings, therefore, are to be considered part of my workflow as a professional, not an academic reflection on activities.

2. After each meeting, I reflect on the event as a *researcher*, structuring my findings according to the applicable units of analysis.

3. Combining my professional notes of the meeting with my academic reflection, I process all findings in the draft case study review.

4. If relevant or necessary, I check (parts of) my reflection or notes with the applicable stakeholder to prevent factual inaccuracies.

5. Either a) the draft case study review is finalised, b) the draft is adapted based on stakeholder feedback, or c) a next meeting triggers step 1 of the process in which case I switch from *researcher* to *practitioner* again.

For a relevant case study review, I need to be able to identify and describe positive aspects of the partnership as well as impeding factors. This also includes addressing and analysing obstructions caused directly by organisations or professionals within the partnership. Describing and contextualising shortcomings of individual organisations or professionals therefore is unavoidable. To be able to do so, I need to anonymise the case studies to ensure an objective and thorough analysis. Treating the cases anonymously also solves any privacy issues concerning the signed students for which the partnerships are designed. Therefore, the names of all participants in the partnerships have been changed to prevent the identification of the original cases. This includes the name of the signed student, the school, the company and the involved academic and industrial professionals. With the case study review focusing on the education-industry partnership, only the type of school and company is relevant. Altering any information identifying specific schools, companies or individuals therefore does not impede a relevant implementation of the findings of the case study review in this study.

8.2 Case study: Kopka

8.2.1 Situation

January 2017 – Kopka is the artist name of a Dutch techno DJ/producer studying popular music at a Dutch vocational school. Starting his career producing tracks for his own persona, his core business had gradually shifted to producing music with and for other artists. He had gained recognition with the digital release of a dozen of his own tracks and remixes, steadily developing a name and following in the international techno scene. This eventually resulted in an offer from a Detroit based artist collective, consisting of the investment in a series of co-writing sessions in the US. The key players within the partnership relevant for this case study:

- The Dutch vocational music student Kopka;

- The Dutch vocational music academy, represented by the student's mentor;

- The Detroit artist collective, represented by their co-founder;

- The Real Band, represented by their A&R-manager and their project manager.

The student was enrolled in the second academic year of the three-year vocational music course. A first meeting with the student, the mentor and The Real Band's A&R-manager took place in January 2017 with six months of the academic year left. Predicting it would take approximately a month to develop a coherent plan combining all academic and professional activities, the stakeholders decided to focus on developing a plan including both the remainder of the second year and the final year of the course starting

in September. For this period, the student's curriculum consisted of three main components:

1. General classes: Dutch Language, English Language, Mathematics/Economics and Citizenship/Social Science;

2. His major subject dj-ing/producing and supporting classes such as music technology, music theory and music business;

3. The completion of his internship portfolio of professional activities.

The regular class schedule for the final year included a minimum required presence of three days a week. These three days covered a curriculum including all general classes and hours for students to spend individually (or with their band/act) working on their final project as part of their major. The other two days plus the weekends were to be used for professional activities as part of the internship portfolio development.

For the student to complete the vocational music course, in the final year he needed to:

- re-take or compensate all the tests he had missed in the second year;

- pass all the upcoming tests completing the general classes;

- pass the final exam consisting of the final presentation of his project as part of his major;

- deliver an internship portfolio comprising the required number of formally approved hours spent in the professional field;

- spend the required number of academic hours or arrange a formally approved alternative scenario with the school.

With the school foreseeing problems for the student concerning his presence and the completion of the deliverables, they asked The Real Band for support in providing the student with a plan combining his academic and professional activities. This request was explicitly based on the school's intention to cater to the student's needs as much as possible, provided that he would fulfil the minimum requirements for graduation.

The Detroit based artist collective had discovered the student via his online releases and, as a first step, wanted to gain more insights into his potential by observing him while producing tracks and collaborating with other artists. They considered a series of co-writing sessions in their Detroit studio as the ideal format for doing so. The collective offered the student an agreement for an unspecified number of co-writing sessions in Detroit and possibly other US cities, covering all of the student's travel and accommodation expenses. The deal also included the artist collective arranging the writing- and recording studio's including all necessary equipment, and inviting relevant

producers, songwriters, beatmakers, instrumentalists and other artists for the sessions. At the time of the initial meeting, one of the sessions had taken place and two others were planned, one in Detroit and one in Chicago.

8.2.2 Analysis – student level

What practical challenges occurred?

The most obvious problem for the student was his limited academic activity caused by his extensive professional activities. In addition to the writing sessions, each resulting in several weeks of absence, he spent considerable time on producing for the collective back in the Netherlands and on other activities such as (preparing for) live performances. With the student choosing these activities over the course, he had missed out on a substantial number of classes. This had resulted in the student being unable to complete the classes *piano basics*, *music theory* and *citizenship/social science*. In addition, with the student mainly focusing on producing tracks instead of performing them live on stage, he had never actively developed his turntable skills. This has made him fail an intermediate test on DJ skills that was a mandatory component of the curriculum. His absence naturally had also negatively affected his required number of academic hours. This backlog was considered substantial but bridgeable, the main concern focused on the final year of the course. The student would be unable to catch up on his backlog and complete all general classes if his presence during the third year of the course would be as low as it had been in the second year. He would also develop an unbridgeable backlog in the number of required academic hours.

Additionally, his internship portfolio did not include the required number of hours spent in the professional field. Although he had spent considerable time on activities in the music industry both individually and for the artist collective, these were not formally approved as BPV hours. The collective was not an Approved Training Company and for several other professional activities such as live performances and personal releases he had not arranged formalisation. If no solution was to be found for the final year, the student would be unable to develop his BPV portfolio meeting all formal requirements.

What substantive issues occurred?

The student was already producing music that approached professional standards as proven by the interest shown by the artist collective. In specific he had developed extensive skills in the field of music technology, including mastering various hard- and software and mixing/mastering. These topics were also covered in the school's curriculum with classes like *software technology* and *studio technology*. These classes mainly focused on introducing students to the field of music production, touching on a broad spectrum of aspects such as microphone placement, equalizing, compressing,

DAW's, audio converters, MIDI and virtual orchestration. Several of these topics had no immediate relevance for the student since he, for example, rarely recorded live instruments. Additionally, for his work with the collective, the student specifically needed to develop his skills using VST (Virtual Studio Technology): software technology used to integrate virtual instruments or audio effects in a digital audio workstation. The classes only superficially touched on this topic, not providing the student with the adequate support. When discussed with the school, they indicated that such in-depth knowledge on the subject was unavailable amongst the teaching staff and therefore they could not help with this specific request.

Additionally, the student was in need of legal advice concerning his deal with the collective. The agreement between the student and the collective was based on an unspecified number of writing sessions that would be evaluated and potentially extended after each session. The deal was made partially via oral agreement and partially via email, providing limited formal documentation. Although this made the deal appear seemingly noncommittal, the collective's investment in the writing sessions was considerable. It was obvious that they would expect some return on investment, the collective however did not provide any details on this. Since the agreement did not include an exclusive right to sign the student to the collective when the collaboration turned out to be satisfactory, the investment could not be considered artist development costs per se. This suggested that the return on investment was anticipated to come from the student's work developed during the sessions. Therefore, the student was in need of legal advice concerning all copy-, master- and neighbouring rights related to the musical works he would (co)develope during the sessions. The situation included three specific aspects of music rights of which the student had too little knowledge. First of all, the musical works were developed in co-production with other artists, which meant a partitioning of the copyright over the writers was applicable. Secondly, the student worked at the sessions all expenses paid, which possibly meant the productions were considered music on commission. According to standard legislation, this would result in the music rights automatically being owned by the employer, in this case being the artist collective. Thirdly, US-specific rules and regulations were applicable, which made the student's knowledge on the subject in the Dutch context possibly inapplicable and/or irrelevant. Because of these specifics and the in-depth knowledge of music rights required for this case, the school could not provide the student in his legal request with simply not having the knowledge in-house. Additionally, they were hesitant to provide him with legal advice because of the fear of being subjective, incomplete or simply wrong.

What solutions are used to solve the issues?

The final plan was based on the intention of limiting the student's educational activities to the minimum required for graduation. With the school having provided these minimum requirements earlier (as described in 7.3.1), they agreed to reduce the student's required presence to two days a week. This was estimated to be adequate for successfully completing all general classes and would provide the student with sufficient academic hours. Building on this agreement, the plan was expanded including the following solutions to the specific problems:

Piano basics

For compensating the missed (and thus failed) test, the student would prepare two piano pieces to be performed live to the piano teacher in a one-on-one session. If his instrumental skills were considered sufficient, he could complete the subject with a final assessment. This consisted of the development of an extensive presentation including screenshots and audio files, reporting on how he included a self-played piano score into one of his productions.

Music theory

The curriculum included two more tests; one at the end of each semester. For the student, the school would create a custom exam expanding the standard tests with all the topics covered in the two tests he had missed. In addition, he needed to deliver analyses of two of his own productions explicitly demonstrating his understanding of music theory.

DJ skills

The student's turntable skills were not at the required level and all stakeholders agreed that additional, individual coaching would be the most effective solution. However, the school initially indicated they were unable to provide this, having no resources available for individual coaching. It was agreed that The Real Band would provide the required additional funding for an external coach that would be selected by the student in consultation with The Real Band's A&R-manager. A week later the school communicated that it somehow did have funds available for the external coach, not providing any more details on this change of course. Eventually, they arranged and financed the external coach, who would prepare the student for re-taking the test he had failed earlier.

Internship portfolio

The key to completing the BPV portfolio was to arrange accreditation of all the student's professional activities as official internship hours. With the collective being unable to do so, another organisation needed to provide the formalisation of the US writing sessions. It was agreed that The Real Band would function as the Approved

Training Company for all the student's professional activities with the organisation's project manager being the internship supervisor. In addition to all future professional activities, they would also explore the possibilities of accrediting hours spent in the industry prior to this plan.

Music technology classes

The solution for the music technology classes consisted of two components. First of all, it was agreed that the student was exempted from the classes if he could prove his level of music production was on the level required for completing the classes. The proof consisted of a detailed analysis of some of his tracks, elaborating on the production process. Furthermore, he would provide a detailed report of his upcoming writing session in Detroit, accompanied with all the tracks he (co)produced during the sessions. In addition, the collective would provide a reference letter including a reflection on the student's work during the writing sessions.

Secondly, the extra coaching needed on VST was to be provided by The Real Band. They would provide the funds and select a VST expert in consultation with the student. The student would prepare a specific set of questions to discuss with the expert, relating to his current situation and/or individual tracks.

Legal advice

The school had indicated early on that it would be unable to meet the student's request for additional legal support. It was agreed that The Real Band would select and provide an expert on the subject, drawn from the organisation's network of music industry partners.

8.2.3 Analysis – partnership level

What framework (if any) was used for the design of the partnership?
The first meeting was initiated by the academy, based on the prognosis that the student would not be able to graduate if his investment in the course did not increase. It instantly became clear that because of the physical distance, the collective would play a minor role in the development of a partnership. They however indicated that they were willing to participate in the partnership by for instance providing deliverables such as the report reflecting on the student's work. Their main motive seemed to be that they wanted to do the student a favour; they did not expect to gain anything more from the partnership. Taking the problems indicated by the school as a basis, the framework the school operated in automatically became the framework for the design of the partnership. This meant the general framework for Dutch vocational music education, including all rules and regulations on required academic hours and internship completion. This also included the Qualification Document as the substantive

framework for the curriculum and its derivatives such as tests and exams, and the class schedules. This framework enabled the school to easily formulate the minimum requirements for the student to graduate. Having agreed on reducing the student's required presence as one of the goals, these minimum requirements became the core of activities on which the partnership was built. The student agreed to fulfil these requirements as the school's main condition for further exploring the possibilities for individual support. The educational activities also provided the timeline for the partnership, following the final academic school year from September up until June. The solutions for the individual issues were subsequently added on to or included in this planning. In combination with the passive attitude of the collective, this framework created a disbalance in the partnership. The student's individual development plan was developed based on the curriculum and the activities with the collective were not an integral part of it. Additionally, the extra support agreed upon was mainly provided and funded by The Real Band, which also formalised the professional activities as BPV hours. This made the execution of the plan rely heavily on the school and The Real Band. It also resulted in the collective seeing the plan primarily as an educational affair, not addressing it as a partnership between two equal partners collaborating on the development of the student.

How did the use of The Cycle affect the design of the partnership?
As described in Chapter 7.2, *The Cycle* can be used as a framework in two variants: a timeline for the chronological planning of activities and a substantial division of the music industry using revenue sources. The timeline of the student's development plan was derived from the curriculum and not based on the professional activities. *The Cycle* therefore was not applied as a framework for planning activities in this project. It was however relevant as a tool for substantively structuring and discussing the student's work and relate it to the course. The writing camps were clearly related to phase 1 and 2 of *The Cycle*, since new musical material was composed and produced/recorded. This already framed the possible solutions for both his legal requests and the issues related to music technology. The music rights and corresponding revenue sources that create phase 1 of *The Cycle* are copyrights, and phase 2 is based on master- and neighbouring rights. These rights therefore were the topics to elaborate on when formulating the relevant questions for a legal professional concerning the writing camps. For the music technology issues a similar framing was applicable, with only the technology used in music recording and production being relevant. These insights enabled the school to match professional activities with components of the curriculum such as the report on his tracks as part of his music theory test and the solution for the music technology classes.

What were notable issues affecting the design of the partnership?

Although the student frequently choosing professional activities over school seemed to prove otherwise, he was genuinely willing to complete the course. This considerably benefited the partnership, since it made him instantly agree on fulfilling the minimum requirements for graduation, including attending the two days of classes a week in the final year. He was satisfied with the final development plan as agreed upon and very pleased with the additional coaching, providing him with renewed motivation for the final year of the course.

The agreement between the student and the artist collective was only partly documented and the details on the co-writing sessions remained unclear during the design of the artist development plan. Therefore, there was no clear industry plan available, making it hard to include it as an integral part of the partnership. Another factor negatively affecting the partnership was the school having limited possibilities for providing extra-curricular and individual coaching of the student. In combination with the artist collective not being able to provide the required additional coaching nor the BPV accreditation, The Real Band attained a more prominent role in the collaboration then intended. Initially, the organisation was only to assist in the development of the partnership and possibly play a role in the accreditation of internship hours. Eventually, the organisation became an indispensable stakeholder, providing in the majority of the extra coaching and being the key to the internship portfolio development. Although this benefited the student, ideally The Real Band would not have been needed for a well-functioning education-industry partnership.

8.3 Case study: Capitals

8.3.1 Situation

October 2016 – Pop band Capitals consists of three Dutch vocational music students that planned to release their first album in spring 2017. The three band members were all enrolled in the second year of the music course at the Dutch vocational school. In the two previous years, the band had won several local and national band competitions and released three singles under their own management. For the recording and release of the upcoming album, the band signed a deal with a Dutch record company. The key players within the partnership relevant for this case study:

- The three Dutch vocational music students forming the band;

- The Dutch vocational music academy, represented by the students' study supervisor;

- The Dutch record label, represented by their A&R-manager;

- The Real Band, represented by their project manager.

A first meeting with the students, the study supervisor, the label's A&R-manager and The Real Band's project manager took place in October 2016 with eight months of school left for the academic year. These months were divided in roughly six months of mandatory classes and projects, alternated with two periods of project finalisation and tests/exams spanning one month each. The students had not developed a substantive or administrative backlog yet, the school initiated the partnership as a preventive measure.

The deal between the band and the record label was based on the release of one full-length album, with the intention of advancing and expanding the partnership when proven successful. The plan for the release built on the previous activities and artistic direction determined by the band. In particular, they had chosen to develop a sound and image explicitly referring to the 90s music genre *teen pop*. So far, this direction had proven successful with the three single releases, a considerable number of shows and substantial media coverage. The plan developed with the record label pursued in this direction, developing this sound and image in more detail and market the band as such. This meant implementing the '90s style' across all aspects of the band: the thematics of songs, the sound of recordings, the image of the band on stage including for instance clothing and haircuts, the look and feel of promotional material such as press photo's and video clips, etc. At the time of the first meeting, the band was still composing the songs for the album. The intention was to create at least double the number of songs needed, to be able to select the best 10 songs for the album.

8.3.2 Analysis – student level

What practical challenges occurred?
The core of the label's A&R-plan was the development of an album, which was the core of the curriculum as well. Both the school and the label considered their production process the students' main project, expecting them to spend several days a week working on it. Combining two such time-consuming projects was not considered feasible; an exemption from the curriculum's main project was not possible because of the required academic hours. Furthermore, every aspect of the album the band developed in collaboration with the label needed to be in line with the pursued 90s style. This prominently focused on the sound of the band and the sound of the final mix and master. In addition, the final production needed to match professional standards for the album to be released by the label and receive airplay by prominent radio stations. The intensity of the coaching needed for the band to develop the album to this standard was

relatively high. The students needed to be coached during the process of repertoire production and while rehearsing and developing their band sound as part of the album's preproduction. Such intense individual coaching could not be provided by the school, even if it would benefit three students simultaneously.

What substantive issues occurred?

The A&R plan as agreed upon with the students focused on elaborating the 90s style the band had started to develop in their previous activities. All coaching related to the professional activities therefore needed to guide the band according to this plan. If these professional activities would be included in the curriculum, the coaching provided by the school should match this 90s direction as well. Although the school had a diverse and high-quality teaching staff, they would not be able to provide this style specific and in-depth coaching. Additionally, the curriculum was designed to support students active in all possible genres. As a result, the coaching for the main project primarily focused on the *process* of repertoire development and production, in principle not addressing substantive aspects of the music. This style specific substantive coaching, however, was exactly the type of coaching the students needed for their professional activities.

What solutions were used to solve the issues?

The school stimulated students to develop their own style, therefore the main project of the curriculum did not include any obligations or restrictions concerning genre or style. This enabled the students to use the album's preproduction phase as the content for the school's main project. This instantly solved the main practical issue of having two major repertoire production projects running simultaneously. It also enabled the students to work on the album in academic hours, ensuring they would not develop an administrative backlog. Including the production process in the curriculum meant that the school provided the students with coaching when they worked on the album in the academic hours. Since the school could not provide in the substantive, style specific coaching, it was agreed that an external producer needed to be involved. To ensure the student's work on the album in and outside school stayed a coherent unity, it was agreed that the industry's producer would also coach the students when working on the project as a school assignment. The extra funding needed therefore was provided by The Real Band, since the school had no funds available for extra, individual coaching.

With the project formally being divided into an academic part and an industrial part, the formalisation of the project was divided over BOT- and BPV hours as well. The preproduction taking place inside the school was considered standard BOT as part of the required number of academic hours. The hours spent on the recording and production of the album following the preproduction inside the school were accredited as internship hours. The label was not an Approved Training Company, so they would not be able to

provide this accreditation. The school however had an agreement with an external organisation that was officially approved to provide the formal accreditation. This organisation therefore was involved in the partnership, functioning as an administrative body and explicitly not providing any substantive guidance.

8.3.3 Analysis – partnership level

What framework (if any) was used for the design of the partnership?
The academy initiated the partnership, although they had no standard strategy or policy for dealing with signed students. This was one of the reasons they requested The Real Band to get involved in order to utilise the organisation's knowledge on education-industry partnerships. With the school having no policy available for student-centred collaborations with industrial partners, they had no standard framework to implement. The core of the student's professional project, repertoire development and album production, was partially included in the curriculum as their main academic project. The professional activities were included as content of an academic project that was already scheduled. Therefore, it was obvious to use the curriculum as the practical framework for planning all activities. It offered the most straightforward solution and resulted in as little moderations as possible of the student's agendas. In addition to this timeline, the school needed a substantive framework to match the professional activities to the examination and/or BPV portfolio. For both the BOT and BPV activities the Qualification Document was used, selecting the core tasks and work processes most closely related to the activities. This enabled the activities to be supervised and graded according to the formal guidelines, including them into the required BOT examination and the BPV portfolio.

How did the use of The Cycle affect the design of the partnership?
As described in Chapter 7.2, *The Cycle* can be used as a framework in two variants: a timeline for the chronological planning of activities and a substantial division of the music industry using revenue sources. Since the initial curriculum was the most obvious choice to use as the practical framework, *The Cycle* was not used as a timeline for the final partnership. It did however provide a timeline for describing the student's activities in collaboration with the label, in order to create a clear overview of the process for the school. The A&R plan was based on a traditional album production consisting of writing-recording-releasing, and the students were still at the beginning of the process. Therefore, describing the plan according to *The Cycle* was straightforward, with the plan simply including all three consecutive phases starting with phase 1. Adding the label's planning of all activities to this plan, enabled an easy match with the school's curriculum.

As a substantive framework, *The Cycle* was primarily used in selecting the appropriate work processes and core tasks for the activities. The album production covered three phases, of which phase 1 would take place inside the school. This narrowed the relevant elements of the Qualification Document down to all aspects relating to composing/songwriting and copyrights.

What were notable issues affecting the design of the partnership?
The school initiated the collaboration with the label as a preventive measure; the students did not have any substantive or administrative backlog yet at the start of the design process. This benefited the partnership by only having to provide in the prevention of future issues, not needing to include overdue work or substitute assignments. This made creating a clear overview of the situation effortless, enabling quick identification of possible issues and solutions. It also meant that no time needed to be reserved for catching up on any backlog, providing sufficient room in the student's agendas for planning activities.

By initiating the partnership, the school had already proven to be willing to cater to the students' needs in relation to their professional activities. Not only did the school consider a collaboration with the label in the best interest of their students, they also in general welcomed connections with music companies as a means to stay in touch with the industry they were preparing their students for. The school maintained this constructive attitude throughout the development of the collaboration. The study supervisor, for example, spent considerable time on meetings and communication, and actively sought possibilities within the applying general and institution-specific rules and regulations concerning attendance, examination and BPV completion. The supervisor benefited from the fact that the main project of the curriculum included little obligations and restrictions, stimulating students to develop their own styles as much as possible. This made it easy to implement the professional activities as part of this project. The downside however was that the provided coaching primarily focused on the process, not providing in the students' need for genre-specific coaching.

The record label showed a similar constructive attitude, instantly expressing their desire to collaborate with the school on the student's development. They endorsed the school's mission to develop the students as versatile musicians, although they articulated that the academic activities not related to the album production were not of their interest. They welcomed any additional coaching the school and/or The Real Band could provide and were willing to invest time in the collaboration in return. This attitude primarily showed in their rapid communication and their willingness to provide documentation on the A&R plan in general and the album production plan in specific.

With the school and the company both eager to develop the partnership, the potential issues and possible solutions were identified relatively fast. One of the key aspects of the partnership was that the producer would be involved during academic hours as a coach for the students. With the school not being able to provide the funding needed therefor and the label not willing to, The Real Band needed to provide it. This made the plan depend partially on the organisation's involvement, which would not be needed in an ideal scenario.

8.4 Case study: Gabriella López

8.4.1 Situation

February 2016 – Gabriella López is a female hip-hop rapper/vocalist with Colombian roots, studying at a Dutch vocational school. In 2015 she had won a talent show resulting in a contract with a music agency. In addition to her activities as a solo artist she was part of a successful hip-hop collective. This collective's agenda included multiple performances a month and several rehearsal sessions planned in the evening. The key players within the partnership relevant for this case study:

- The Dutch vocational music student Gabriella López;

- The Dutch vocational music academy, represented by the students' mentor;

- The music agency, represented by their A&R-manager;

- The Real Band, represented by their project manager.

The student was enrolled in the second academic year of the three-year vocational music course. An intial meeting between the student, the mentor and The Real Band's project manager took place in February 2016. At that time there were five months left of the academic year; four months of classes and one month of tests, exams and project finalisations. The education-industry plan focused on both the remainder of the second academic year and the final year of the course starting in September.

The contract with the music agency included the production of one solo album to be released in October 2016. At the time of the first meeting, half of the repertoire for the album had been composed and nothing had been recorded yet. Winning the talent show had also resulted in several other obligations with the two main elements being various media appearances and providing workshops.

8.4.2 Analysis – student level

What practical challenges occurred?

The curriculum of the course provided in the development of an album as Gabriella's graduation project. Until winning the talent show, she had been considering this album to be her debut as a solo artist. Marking the end of the course, she had considered the album the ideal transition from the academic context to the music industry. The initial production plan, as included in the curriculum, covered one year, with the album to be released in May 2017. The music agency however needed the student to release an album as soon as possible to make full use of the momentum created by winning the talent show. In consultation with the student, they decided that a release in October created a realistic timeframe for the production process. This however interfered with the student's initial planning and with the curriculum. In the initial plan, the curriculum provided the student with substantial opportunities to work on the album since it would be the main project of the final year. In the new scenario, the extensive work on the album interfered with various other time-consuming academic components, especially in the remainder of the second year. The student particularly foresaw problems with the general subjects Dutch Language, English Language, Mathematics/Economics and Citizenship/Social Science. First of all, she questioned if she would be able to spend enough time outside the classes on the subjects to successfully complete the necessary assignments, tests and exams. Secondly, the general classes were mostly scheduled at the start of the day. In particular, the shows and rehearsals with the hip-hop collective often resulted in the student coming home after midnight, making it a challenge to attend the 9 AM classes the next morning. In general, the hip-hop collective added another series of extensive activities to the student's full schedule.

It seemed obvious to include the agency's album production plan into the curriculum as the student's main project. This would enable the student to work on the album in academic hours, working consecutively on repertoire development, recording and releasing/promoting/performing. The initial curriculum provided in the production of an album as well, providing substantial time to work on it. However, within the curriculum the production plan covered a full year, being the core of the academic plan. All classes and coaching were scheduled to match this main project, with songwriting lessons matching the repertoire development, music technology classes matching the recording, etc. The professional production plan only covered the upcoming eight months, ending with the release in October. Including this plan as the main project would result in the classes not substantively matching with the student's activities anymore.

The student's agenda included three main components: the curriculum, the agency's album production plan and the activities with the hip-hop collective. In addition to these

activities that already provided her with substantial planning difficulties, she had obligations related to the talent show. These included vocal workshops she had to provide to participants of the new season's talent show as part of their artist development program. These were planned far ahead but took up to full working days and also needed preparation time. Additionally, the obligations included various interviews and other media appearances. Also, the hip-hop collective was regularly asked to perform on the radio or in television shows. These promotional activities generally were scheduled during the day, resulting in the student missing out on classes. Anticipating these activities by for example rescheduling classes or arranging substitute assignments was difficult with last-minute requests being the rule rather than the exception.

The promotional activities included appearances on radio and television, and interviews to be published in the press. The student had little experience with media attention and was insecure about her verbal skills and appearance. She expressed the need for media training to develop this important aspect of her professional practice. The school however was unable to provide this individual additional coaching since it lacked both the financial resources and the expertise.

What substantive issues occurred?
The agency's A&R plan was developed in close collaboration with the student and was based on her own artistic ideas. The album built on repertoire the student had written earlier and recorded as demos, providing the artistic direction for the remainder of the songs for the album. The curriculum components relating to album production did not include any restrictions to genre or style since they were designed to cater to all students regardless of their style or genre. Therefore, there was no artistic discrepancy between the content of the classes and the professional production plan; the mismatch was merely organisational. It however resulted in the coaching focusing on the process of album development and not substantively on the music to be written and recorded. Although the student considered this useful and relevant guidance, it posed a challenge in the search for a producer. The student had agreed with the agency that she would take an active lead in selecting a suitable producer for the album, mainly because she wanted to match with the producer on a personal level as well as on a musical and artistic level. Together with the agency she had compiled a longlist with producers of which she had already met a few. With her teachers and supervisors staying at a relative distance to her music, it was difficult for them to support her in choosing the most suitable producer. Additionally, they were hesitant to provide their opinions on individual producers considering it a personal and case-specific matter, also wanting to retain a neutral position as a school towards music industry professionals.

What solutions were used to solve the issues?

With the student's extensive professional activities resulting in several organisational issues, the school first of all focused on reducing the time the student needed to spend in the classroom. Therefore, the professional album production was included into the curriculum as the student's main project, replacing the school's album production project. This enabled the student to work on her professional activities in the academic hours scheduled for the project, solving the issue of having a major professional project on top of the curriculum. The professional production plan however had a shorter timeframe than the project in the initial curriculum, posing the issue of supporting classes not matching the album production anymore. The school acknowledged that the relevance of these classes decreased if not substantively matched to a concrete project, so they were willing to reschedule or even cancel classes where possible. No changes were made to classes like songwriting and concept development since the repertoire production phase of the industry's A&R plan matched the school's initial production plan. The classes not matching the plan were divided into two categories. First of all, there were several classes such as marketing and entrepreneurship the student had to attend even if their content did not directly relate to her professional activities. This was mainly caused by the fact that these classes included components that were part of the student's final exam. Rescheduling these classes was not an option since they were offered collectively and because they were part of the official national exam. Substitute assignments therefore were not an option either. Secondly, there were several classes such as studio technology for which the student was exempted. Her recording sessions for the album were considered a substantive equivalent of the classes, providing no need for extra assignments on the subject. Additionally, the recording sessions were accredited as official BPV hours by the school's external internship agency, solving a potential issue of the student developing an administrative backlog.

Processing all academic and professional activities into a single agenda provided the student with a clear overview of her schedule for the upcoming months. In particular, it enabled her to identify potential organisational challenges in the (near) future which she had not been able to do before. This not only provided the student with peace of mind but also enabled her to communicate potential future issues with the school and discuss a solution early on. This also included the problem of missing out on 9 AM classes, foreseeing problematic situations for the upcoming months. It did however not solve the issue of last-minute promotional activities, which proved to be a tough challenge. It was agreed that the student would reach out to The Real Band if such a situation occurred, to jointly identify the possible implications of the promotional activity. Based on the student's agenda they would then either reject the offer, reschedule the activity if possible or discuss the implications with the school and possibly arrange a solution. The

fact that The Real Band became the student's point of contact for these cases was related to the organisation's independent position. It was agreed that each promotional proposal needed to be approached as objectively as possible and both the school and the agency would have an interest in a certain outcome of the considerations.

Since the school could not provide substantive guidance in the selection procedure of a producer, it was agreed that the agency would allocate additional time to accompany the student to meetings. If desired by the student, The Real Band could provide additional independent advice. The agency also agreed to provide additional resources for media training, recognizing its importance. Together with the student they would select a suitable trainer and plan several sessions matching her schedule.

8.4.3 Analysis – partnership level

What framework (if any) was used for the design of the partnership?
The partnership's main objective was to solve organisational challenges. The partnership therefore primarily focused on providing the student with renewed control over her agenda by creating a comprehensive overview of all activities and combining them into a single schedule. The curriculum, the agency's A&R plan including the album production and corresponding activities, and the shows with the hip-hop collective were all considered comparatively important for the student's development. With none of these aspects prioritised over the others, there was no natural framework for the integration of all activities. With the student being the common denominator and practical challenges at the core of the issues, it was decided to use her agenda as a basic framework for the partnership. Merging the agendas the student had agreed with the various partners into a single schedule enabled the identification of overlaps and other issues. Working from this central agenda also enabled effective communication and naturally addressed all relevant substantive components related to the planning. The only aspects not covered by this approach were any substantive needs not relating to concrete items on the agenda. This, for example, included the need for media training for which a solution needed to be identified and discussed separately.

How did the use of The Cycle affect the design of the partnership?
As described in Chapter 7.2, *The Cycle* can be used as a framework in two variants: a timeline for the chronological planning of activities and a substantial division of the music industry using revenue sources. The student's agenda was used as a framework to integrally plan all academic and professional activities, with the album production plan being a major component. After being scheduled in detail, the plan needed to be related to the curriculum to identify any classes not substantively matching the production plan. In this process, *The Cycle* provided an effective tool for matching the classes to the

three phases that jointly created the album production plan. Additionally, it enabled a discussion on the relevance of the substantive relevance of the classes in relation to the student's activities in each phase.

What were notable issues affecting the design of the partnership?

It became clear in the first meeting that the majority of the student's issues were the result of a large number of different activities and focused on planning and organisation. Although this seemed straightforward problems relatively easy to identify and solve by helping her plan her agenda, the student and the school had not been able to do so. This appeared to be caused by the fact that no one had a complete overview of all activities. The school only had a view of the curriculum, the agency only of the A&R plan, etc. The student was the only person able to merge these individual plans but had lost the integral overview in the last few months. Additionally, she expressed that she had a problem in general with planning her activities and maintaining control over several projects simultaneously. It was a skill that she was still actively developing, acknowledging it was not a natural part of her professional skill set. In addition to the lack of knowledge needed of both the academic context and album production, this had resulted in the student not being able to successfully combine all plans. The Real Band appeared to be the solution as an independent and objective organisation with knowledge of both the academic and the industrial context.

The music agency had explicitly stated that it would not be able to reschedule the student's album release later than October since they needed to make use of the momentum created by the talent show. This justifiable inflexibility was compensated by two aspects that greatly benefited the partnership. First of all, they showed considerable willingness to invest in the partnership and the student's development, resulting in allocating time to assist the student in her search for a producer and by providing additional resources for media training. Secondly, they interfered relatively little in the artistic direction of the music to be recorded for the album, enabling the student to follow in the artistic direction she aspired. This made including the album production into the curriculum easier, since no substantial artistic mismatch was present between the curriculum and the industry's A&R plan.

9. Framework for partnership design

By reviewing current approaches of vocational schools dealing with signed students in Chapter 6 and by analysing case studies from my own professional practice in Chapter 8, I identified case-specific challenges for individual students as well as impeding factors for partnership design. This chapter summarises the transcending challenges relevant to address in the framework for partnership design. Subsequently, it provides an overview of the development of the framework based on A&R-tool *The Cycle*.

9.1 Challenges and impeding factors

The research shows that two types of issues can be distinguished for signed vocational music students: *practical challenges* and *substantive issues*. Vocational music courses are designed as full-time courses including up to 30 hours of weekly mandatory classes. When a student gets involved with a music company, it is a challenge to combine this class schedule with extensive professional activities. Missing out on classes has implications for the required academic hours in addition to substantive implications. With the classes providing in the preparation of tests and exams, the student also misses out on content relevant for developing skills and knowledge to the required standards. Curriculum customisation is needed to solve this practical problem, though this is difficult for schools to organise. First of all, schools provide their education collectively, providing all students with equal opportunities. This makes tailoring a curriculum to a specific student a challenge. Additionally, a school in principle has no resources available to provide extra coaching or attention to individual students. Another aspect impeding curriculum- and/or class schedule customisation is the fact that classes, projects, tests and exams are planned at least a year ahead and are mostly fixed for the three academic years. In combination with the use of academic years and semesters or quarters, this creates a challenge when aligning the curriculum with the music industry agenda. A music company does not plan activities using school years or semesters and will also work during most holidays when schools are closed. Additionally, last-minute performances or activities are common in the music industry, interfering with the long-term planning of an academy.

In addition to the practical challenges, a major difficulty can be found in the substantive difference of the individual plans the school and the company provide the student with. The curricula of music academies are designed to develop the student in a broad way. An instrumentalist will also learn to write songs, a songwriter will also get music production lessons, all musicians will do projects in different musical genres, etc. This

is based on the idea of developing students as versatile music professionals, improving their chances on a career in music. The industry plan however focuses on particular skills of the student, matching the agreed A&R-plan. If the core of this plan, for example, is the recording of an album, only activities relevant to its recording and release will be included. Within the plan, there is no or at least very little room for deviation or experiment, since it only provides the shortest path to the release. Since the release is within a certain genre, it requires a specific set of skills of the student. The industry plan will be designed to provide in the development of these skills only, interfering with the broader educational plan.

Additionally, there is a major challenge concerning the student's motivation to finish the popular music course. Students are enrolled in the course based on the ambition of becoming professional musicians. When they get signed to a music company, they could feel like already having accomplished this goal. This has proven to generally result in a lack of motivation for the course, most importantly because they feel they are 'already there'. Working with the company feels like 'the real deal' as opposed to sitting in a class listening to a teacher. This has proven to result in the students considering the level of the classes too low and feeling they are a step ahead than most of their classmates. Although this might be true for some specific classes or projects, the school in general still provides the development of relevant skills and knowledge. The student however can find it difficult to see this relevance, with a lack of motivation as a result. First of all, this is a problem for the academy, with the students being at risk of dropping out if they do not sufficiently see the relevance of the school anymore. Secondly, it is important for the music company that the students see the relevance of classes and projects in order to benefit from the artist development provided by the school.

In addition to the issues of the specific student, there are aspects impeding successful collaboration between the involved school and company. One has to have extensive knowledge of both the educational and industrial context in order to connect the two. To create a well-functioning partnership, you should be able not only to see the difference in interest but also be aware of all (un)written rules and regulations, protocols and policies that apply within both contexts. In general, it is very hard for someone working in one of the two contexts to be up to date with the manner of working in the other context, making it hard to create a joint venture between them. Additionally, education professionals are used to planning activities far ahead, since curricula and matching schedules are roughly fixed for three years ahead. This often reflects in their style of work when it comes to planning meetings and/or short-term opportunities. Music industry professionals are used to ad-hoc requests and rapid communication/decision-making and can characterize education professionals as 'bureaucratic' when they cannot match their work pace. Education professionals, on the other hand, can describe industry

professionals as 'opportunistic', seemingly 'uncareful' or even 'blunt' in their communication and decision-making. This impedes easy and effective communication, which is further negatively affected by the difference in language/register and tone-of-voice. Although it obviously depends on the individual, the 'education language' in general is more formal than the 'industry language'. In particular, documents such as the Qualification Document or examination requirements show formal language, often including elaborate and/or abstract formulations that could be characterized as 'tedious' or 'vague'. Education professionals will normally use a more informal language in their spoken communication, though this 'education language' can still appear in terminology, tone-of-voice, etc. In particular when discussing rules and regulations, or when referring to formal documents. Additionally, education is infamous for its frequent use of abbreviations that are natural for education professionals to use. With the abbreviations not included in the industry's vocabulary, it is a potential source of miscommunication.

9.2 Solutions

Reviewing the current approaches of vocational schools dealing with signed students, two types of solutions for the challenges described in the previous chapter can be distinguished.

First of all, the curriculum can be adjusted to better fit the industry's development plan. This can be accomplished by simply cancelling classes. If needed, the student can compensate the classes by completing a substitute assignment or by including extra BPV in his portfolio. This creates space in the student's agenda but does not contribute to a substantive merger of academic and professional activities. It also potentially creates a problem concerning the required academic hours. This problem is avoided when the curriculum is adjusted by rescheduling classes instead of cancelling them. This is particularly relevant for classes that are relevant for the student, but only if rescheduled to match the professional activity for which the class-content is most valuable. Classes focusing on songwriting skills may for example be highly relevant, but only when scheduled matching the period during which the student is composing for an upcoming release. If the curriculum only provides in the songwriting class after the recording of the new release has started, the potential relevance of the class in relation to the industry plan is not unlocked. In addition, it may have a negative effect on the student's motivation, since they need to spend academic time on activities not relevant (anymore) for their professional activities. Rescheduling classes or projects therefore is an important solution to solve both practical challenges and substantive issues.

The second type of solution focuses on including professional activities in the curriculum. The most straightforward way to do so is by accrediting work in the professional field as an official internship, including the hours spent on the activities as part of the BPV portfolio. An additional benefit is that accrediting these hours as BPV, they do not need to be spent on activities not directly relating to the student's professional practice. Another possibility for including professional activities in the curriculum is tailoring class content to the industry's A&R-plan. This plan describes the required development of certain skills and knowledge that could be addressed in the student's classes. To enable this, an interruption of the continuous series of lessons is often needed. Tailoring classes to individual students also creates the risk of providing learning content favouring specific students over the rest of the class. This makes the solution one of the most challenging and precarious to organise, but also the most successful in creating a substantive merger of academic and industrial activities.

9.3 Framework development

Having identified the transcending challenges and possible solutions concerning signed vocational music students, I use the findings to develop a framework for partnership design. Within this partnership, the industrial plan and the curriculum are merged into a single plan tailored to the specific student. The framework needs to enable the design of a partnership providing in the interests of all three stakeholders: the student, the academy and the music company. Based on my research I identify the key aspects to include in this framework.

The framework for the design of an education-industry partnership for a signed vocational music student should provide in:

- the identification of all practical challenges of the signed student;

- the identification of all substantive issues of the signed student;

- the selection of the most suitable solutions for the practical challenges and substantive issues;

- the implementation of the solutions.

Although this seems to be a straightforward protocol, it appears a challenge for a school to collaborate with a company on its implementation. Exploring these difficulties in more detail with the literature and case study review, I identified the most prominent impeding factors. First of all, a clear overview of the industry's A&R plan is often lacking, making it difficult for the school to comprehend the professional plan. The framework therefore should enable the company to easily but comprehensively describe

their plans, enabling alignment with the academic plan and substantive communication. Secondly, the current framework used for collaboration (if any) is usually the curriculum or another educational framework. This creates a fundamental disbalance in the partnership since it results in addressing the collaboration from the perspective of the school instead of the student. The framework therefore should provide in the academic and industrial plan to be addressed equally, centering the student's development. Including *The Cycle* in the framework addresses both issues, resulting in a framework consisting of three main components:

1. The **timeframe** for the collaboration, usually starting as soon as possible and ending with the student's graduation.

2. The industry's **A&R plan** for the duration of the partnership. The student's activities with the company are described using three elements. First of all, the company provides a schedule with all professional activities such as recording sessions, promotional activities, releases, etc. Secondly, the company adds a distinction of the phases included in the project period. Thirdly, a description of the artistic direction and the required skills and knowledge are provided for each phase, in the framework referred to as *A&R details*.

3. The school's **curriculum** for the duration of the partnership. All relevant classes, projects and other activities are briefly described and matched to the applicable phase. General classes are included in a separate row.

These elements create the schematic overview of the framework as seen in Figure 3.
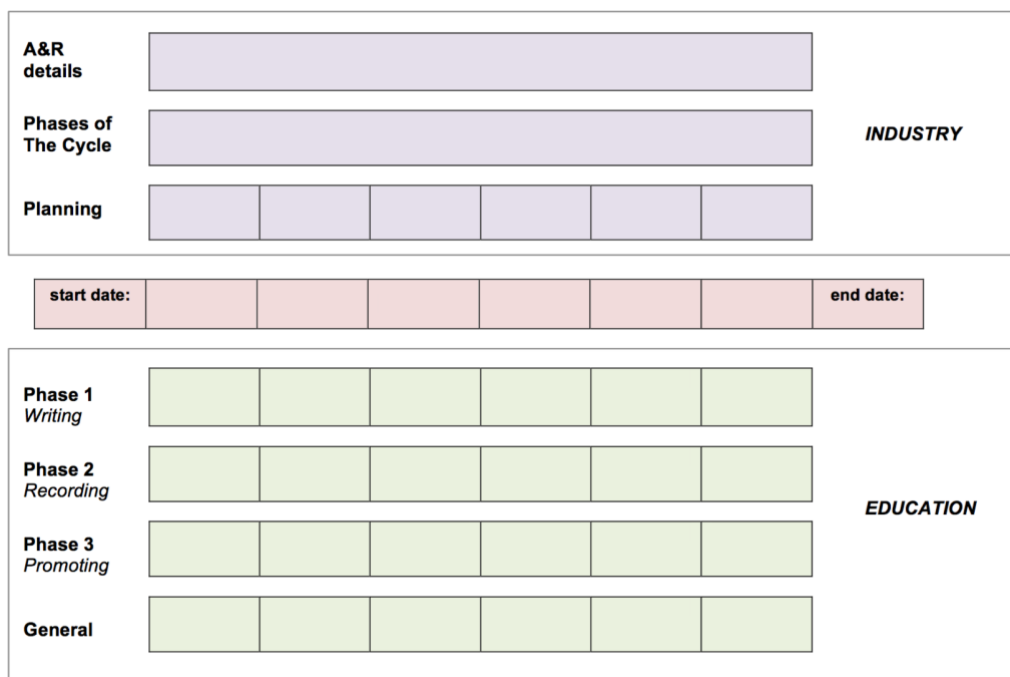

Figure 3: Schematic overview of the framework for partnership design based on The Cycle.

As an example, Figure 4 shows a simplified version of the completed framework for the case study of Gabriella López up until the release of her album.

A&R details	- 10 songs for standard band line-up - style/genre: hiphop/soul following demos			- sound: referring to 70's analogue hiphop recordings - skills needed: presentation skills (on stage and in media)				
Phases of The Cycle	Phase 1: writing			Phase 2: recording				
Planning	- repertoire development - clubtour hiphop collective	- repertoire development - clubtour hiphop collective	- repertoire development - sign definitive deal with producer	- recording sessions	- mixing/mastering - festival tour hiphop collective	- workshops - festival tour hiphop collective	- workshops - promotional tour	- album release
start date: 01/03/16	MAR 16	APR 16	MAY 16	JUN 16	JUL 16	AUG 16	SEP 16	OCT 16
Phase 1 *Writing*	x	x	- start main project: repertoire development - songwriting classes	- mp: repertoire development - songwriting classes	- mp: repertoire development - songwriting classes	holiday	- mp: repertoire development - songwriting classes	x
Phase 2 *Recording*	- music tech classes	- music tech classes	- music tech classes	- music tech assignment	x	holiday	x	- mp: start recording
Phase 3 *Performing*	- marketing/entre-reneurship class	- marketing/entre-reneurship class	- marketing/entre-reneurship class	- marketing final assessment	x	holiday	x	x
General	- general subjects - collective classes: theory, history, etc.	- general subjects - collective classes: theory, history, etc.	- general subjects - collective classes: theory, history, etc.	- test/exams	x	holiday	- collective classes: theory, history, etc.	- collective classes: theory, history, etc.

Figure 4: Completed framework (simplified) for the Gabriella López case study.

Having identified the phases of *The Cycle* in both the industry's plan and the curriculum enables the identification of discrepancies. First of all, by foreseeing straightforward planning difficulties in periods with an incompatible set of activities. It is, for example, self-evident that a 2-week full-time professional recording session cannot be combined with a week of tests and exams. Secondly, substantive mismatches are identified by reviewing the curriculum components appointed to the three phases. These either match or do not match with the phase distinguished in the industry's plan for the same period. In the first scenario, the review focuses on whether the content of the classes matches with the artistic direction and the skills and knowledge as described in the A&R plan. In the second scenario, this substantive review is accompanied by exploring the possibilities of rescheduling the classes to match the applicable phase. In the case of Gabriella López, the mismatches of the curriculum components with the professional activities are easily identified using the phases as seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Reviewed framework for the Gabriella López case study.

These elements then need to be discussed in more detail to determine whether they pose a substantive discrepancy in addition to the practical mismatch. Having listed all the challenges, the solutions can be discussed. There are two possible categories of solutions, each with two variants:

1A. Adjust the school's schedule by **cancelling** classes to remove irrelevant classes from the curriculum and/or to create space in the agenda for industrial activities. The cancelled classes can be compensated by including the industry activities as an internship or with a substitute assignment.

1B. Adjust the school's or company's agenda by **rescheduling** activities. Reviewing the curriculum, this can be used to (better) match classes to the A&R plan or to create space in the agenda for industrial activities. Rescheduling professional activities is merely a means to enable a student to attend mandatory classes/tests/exams or complete projects/assignments that are part of the final exam.

2A. Include industry activities as **BPV** (internship), to include professional experience as an official part of the course and to make sure no irrelevant BPV-activities need to be undertaken by the artist.

2B. Include industry activities as content of **classes/projects** to align the content of classes/projects (better) with the A&R plan. For example by matching the content of the songwriting lessons with the repertoire needed for the album, by adapting the genre of the guitar lessons to the style of the artist's band, etc.

Combining these elements with the framework results in a design process for the partnership consisting of four consecutive steps:

Step 1: Describe

The school, the company and the student arrange an initial meeting to get to know eachother and discuss the academic and industrial plan of the student. If one or multiple stakeholders are not acqainted with the framework, it is discussed and clarified where needed. The timeframe for the partnership is determined and a second meeting is set for step 2. Following the meeting, the school and the company use the framework to describe the curriculum and the industrial plan respectively.

Step 2: Align and **Step 3: Plan**

A second meeting takes place including the school, the company and the student to settle step 2 and 3. This meeting is usually scheduled no more than two weeks after the initial meeting. During the second meeting, the industrial plan and the curriculum are discussed to identify mismatches. Subsequently the solutions per issues are discussed. The outcome of the meeting is a student-centred plan including the curriculum and the industrial plan, both modified where needed. Based on this plan, all tasks and responsibilities of the school, the company and the student are agreed upon. If desired, a declaration of intent is signed to ensure the agreement and dedication of everyone involved.

Step 4: Execute

The plan as agreed upon is carried out, in practice this usually means that the company resumes working on their core business. The school therefore needs to initiate communication on the partnership and its progress. A final evaluation takes place after the partnership has ended; mid-term evaluations can be arranged if needed.

10. Developing the handbooks

Chapter 9.3 describes the development of the framework based on the literature research, the review of current practices of vocational schools dealing with signed students, and the case study analysis. This chapter describes the development of the handbooks presenting the framework to the school and the company. The content and form of the handbooks are tailored to these specific target audiences to present the framework as effectively as possible.

10.1 Content of the handbooks

The two handbooks are developed for education professionals and music industry professionals respectively. With the partnerships focusing on tailormade programs for signed students, the involved education professionals are mainly mentors, study supervisors and coordinators. Within the music industry, the involved professional in general is the company's A&R-manager or an employee working on artist development. In the case studies of signed vocational music students reviewed in Chapter 8, the role of The Real Band as coordinator of the design process was indispensable. The handbooks however should enable the school and the company to develop a partnership without interference of The Real Band or any other initiating/catalysing entity. Therefore, the handbooks need to include a protocol for implementation and guidelines for leading the design process. The collaborations are predominantly initiated by schools, mainly because they experience the most difficulties when a student signs to a music company. Therefore, the guidelines for coordinating the design of the partnership are included in the education handbook, making the education professional in charge of the design process. The industry handbook only includes the minimum information required to function within the process, given the fact that they will receive the handbook from an education professional.

The primary aim of the handbooks is to present the framework to the school and the company. The publications therefore evidently include information on the framework and the protocol for implementation. The research also shows that there are challenges on the level of the partnership that impede a successful implementation of the partnership. The handbooks therefore also provide in creating the required conditions for the partnership to be successfully developed. First of all, the school and the company need to see the relevance of the partnership for their own organisation in order to justify the investment in resources required for developing the partnership. Both handbooks therefore commence with explicitly addressing why the partnership benefits the school

or the company. Secondly, the handbooks need to solve the problem of education professionals possibly not having the required in-depth knowledge of the music sector that industry professionals have and vice versa. The handbooks therefore include introductions on the music industry and Dutch vocational music education respectively, to create a basic shared knowledge base and vocabulary. This also contributes to enabling effective communication between the school and the company, which has shown to greatly benefit a successful partnership.

In particular with regards to partnership evaluation and formalisation, the development of several deliverables during the design process is included as a recommendation. These documents include a Declaration of Intent and mid-term/final evaluations. A music company has no direct interest in thorough evaluation and the need for the other deliverables for the company is limited. To ensure the motivation and dedication of the company to invest in the collaboration, it is given as little paperwork as possible. The deliverables and additional information on evaluation therefore are included in the education handbook only.

10.2 Form and structure of the handbooks

The aim of the handbooks is to enable a vocational music school and a music company to develop a student-centered partnership based on the framework without The Real Band's interference. This is mainly achieved by including guidelines for coordination in the education handbook to enable the education professional to manage the design process. The form of the handbooks, however, also contributes to this guidance by providing a clear and comprehensive protocol for the implementation of the framework. Additionally, the handbooks include a link to a template of the framework. The school and the company completing and discussing this template already implicitly guides them through a basic design process. The template in combination with the content and structure of the handbooks therefore enable the school and the company to design a partnership without the involvement of The Real Band.

The handbooks are presented in text documents since these are straightforward, easy to use, and enable flexibility in terms of the user skipping known information or moving straight to a specific section. Additionally, it makes the handbooks easy to share and to read on any computer, tablet and smartphone, and on paper when printed.

The handbooks start with introductions focusing on the relevance of a successful partnership for the school and the company respectively. Particularly in the industry handbook this introduction is of great importance. Since the company generally does not consider the artist studying at a vocational music school a significant problem, it is

important to use the introduction to emphasise the company's relevance of investing substantially in collaborating with the school. The sections containing general and/or background information are included as separate chapters. This enables professionals to skip the sections if they have worked with the handbook before, or if they have gained the knowledge elsewhere. This enables the other chapters to merely focus on clearly describing the framework and the protocol for implementation, not needing to address additional contextualising information.

Tailoring the handbooks to the specific target audiences also includes choosing the most effective vocabulary, register and tone-of-voice. This most clearly shows in the choice of words, for example by using 'student' in the education handbook and 'artist' in the industry handbook. In general, the 'education language' is more formal than the 'industry language'. Documents such as the Qualification Document and examination requirements show formal language and most music industry professionals are not accustomed to this seemingly indirect way of communicating. The industry handbook therefore includes more direct and straightforward use of language, omitting education specific terminology. Since the industry professional however will inevitably come across specific terminology when collaborating with the school, a list of essential terminology is provided. Another example of a difference in nuance is found in the industry handbook describing 'collaborating with the school' instead of 'developing a partnership'. Although seemingly similar, the latter is at a higher risk of being interpreted as a comprehensive and long-term, intense collaboration. Describing the partnership as low-key and non-committal as possible contributes to keeping the company motivated to invest in the partnership.

11. Conclusions and recommendations

Over the last decade, Dutch vocational music education has shown a substantial growth in quantity and quality. Today, 11 vocational schools are providing high-quality education to around 1,200 popular music students. The considerable list of currently successful popular music artists with a background in vocational music education proves the legitimacy of the schools in developing musical talent. To name a few: Martin Garrix, Douwe Bob, Mr Polska, Lisa Lois, Tim Knol, Sevn Alias, Nielson and Birth of Joy. This development has increasingly drawn the attention of the music industry, considering the schools as a potential alternative source for artist development. In addition, the schools are mainly government-funded which is welcomed as an alternative for the decreased A&R budgets caused by the decline in album sales. Collaborating on the development of talented popular music artists therefore seems obvious, evidently creating added value for both academies and music companies. When a student gets extensively involved with a music company, collaborating on the development of this specific student demonstrably benefits the involved school and company. Yet student-centred partnerships are still rarely seen in Dutch vocational music education. One of the goals of public-private partnership The Real Band is to stimulate the development of these partnerships by intiating education-industry collaborations. My professional practice as project manager for The Real Band includes the design of these partnerships from an independent position. The main aim of this study was to review the strategy I used for designing these partnerships, develop a framework based on my findings, and develop two handbooks to present the framework to music education professionals and music industry professionals respectively. This chapter provides a summary of my findings reviewing and contextualising this process. First of all, I provide my findings relating to my main research question as formulated in Chapter 3:

> What are key issues for designing student-centred partnerships between Dutch vocational music schools and music companies?

Secondly, I reflect on my research process to identify recommendations and suggest topics for further research.

11.1 Key issues for partnership design

Signed vocational music students can experience a number of issues that can be divided into practical challenges and substantive issues. At first sight, the solutions for these

issues seem easy to identify and implement. In practice this has proven to be difficult, with impeding factors mainly occuring at the level of the collaboration rather than at the level of the individual student. Having examined these aspects in more detail, I identify the following key issues for designing student-centred partnerships in Dutch vocational music education.

The most straighforward challenges for signed students are practical since they need to combine a full-time vocational course with extensive professional activities. This results in the students frequently needing to choose between academic and industrial activities, often choosing the latter. This results in the company not considering the course a hindering factor per se; the school is faced with the consequences. This creates a disbalance in a potential partnership since it seemingly only benefits the school, leaving the company with no direct interest in investing in collaboration. For successfully designing a student-centred partnership it is therefore essential that the company considers collaborating relevant as well by explicating the benefits for the company. This shows a fundamental difference in relevance of an education-industry partnership: for a school it mainly is a solution to a *problem*, whereas for the company it is an *opportunity* to make use of the school's the resources for their own A&R. Explicating what these opportunities entail is essential for the company seeing the relevance of a potential education-industry partnership.

Directly related to the school and the company both needing to see the relevance is the issue of *return on investment*. Developing a partnership requires a time investment, the actual partnership might require additional investments of resources depending on case-specific agreements. Particularly for the companies, these investments need to be in balance with the benefits they gain from the partnership. In general, they will only weigh the benefits directly attributable to the company; aspects benefiting the school will have little to no influence. Companies may not be motivated to participate if they are in doubt about their potential gains from the partnership.

The issues concerning a signed student are the result of having an extensive professional plan on top of the curriculum. Designing a student-centred partnership is based on effectively aligning these plans; both plans need to be explicitely described to do so. For the school this is a given since curricula are generally planned and described in detail for all three academic years. For a music company this does not come naturally per se, resulting in a varying level of detail in the description of A&R plans. For the design of a partnership, the school and the company need to have insights into their respective plans. Providing detailed descriptions of the curriculum and the A&R plan respectively therefore is an essential condition for successful partnership design.

Student-centred education-industry collaborations in the music sector in general do not originate organically. Even when the benefits of a potential partnership for the school and the company are clear, the design process needs to be explicitly initiated and managed. An organisation like The Real Band can take care of this as an independent and objective entity. One of the main benefits is that the organisation is not affiliated with either the school or the company and thus has no other interest than developing a successful education-industry collaboration. The Real Band, however, is a unique organisation dependent on confined government funding. In an ideal situation, vocational music education and the music industry collaborate without the need of an external catalyst like The Real Band. This means either the school or the company needs to take the responsibility of managing the design process.

11.2 Recommendations

The research area addressed in this study was defined by the chosen methodology and the research questions matching the aim of this study. Reviewing this specific field, I have identified several topics and areas of potential further research.

This study is based on my professional practice, including A&R-model *The Cycle* in the development of a model for education-industry collaboration. It is recommended that research is conducted reviewing additional models for partnership design. This could provide supplementary insights into key issues for education-industry collaborations in the music sector, attributing to developing and/or improving models for partnership design.

The literature review has shown that currently limited research is available on Dutch vocational music education. In particular, little literature is available on the effects of students engaging extensively with the music industry. Research on signed students, possibly also in other training domains, could contribute to a better understanding of the issues concerning these students. Comprehending these issues is essential for developing effective approaches for dealing with signed students.

During the course of this study I have identified several factors impeding education-industry partnerships. Further research on these aspects could provide vocational music education with insights needed to develop policies for dealing with signed students. Not only could this help individual schools better facilitate these students, but it could also increase the relevance of the vocational music education sector as a whole for the music industry. Additionally, further research on this topic could benefit vocational education in other sectors in collaborating with their respective industries.

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