In the paper I discuss the interrelations between the ways educational planning in Denmark in general is argued and implemented and the implicit and partly explicit ideas of the students attending the educational system. The specific focus is on Vocational Education and Training (VET). Empirically I draw on an investigation carried out among 1274 students attending VET in Denmark. Meteorologically questionnaires have been applied. The questionnaires has three focuses:

- The cultural and social background of the students and their previous educational carrier
- The students appreciation of the education in which they are presently attending and their future aspirations concerning job, further education and family life.
- Finally their actual consumption of “cultural goods”. 

The investigation is the primary empirical point of departure for a PhD. thesis focussing on the interrelations between educational planning and young people actually attending VET. The basic concern guiding the work is related to the apparent discrepancies between the dominant tendencies in educational planning, characterised by individualisation of the educational process, demands on the students to be reflective and introspective, to able to conduct self-evaluation and to take responsibility for their own learning process – and the way in which the educational practice, including the students and the teachers, on the one hand actually able to
fulfil those politically posed aspirations, and on the other hand what the consequences might be in terms the educational systems actual inclusive potentials. In other words, does the described tendencies promote processes of inclusion or does they rather promote processes of exclusion of students who are not in the first place equipped with the abilities that the educational system demands. The analysis applies a construction of the different positions within the field of VET, with a specific focus on the bureaucratic position, as expressed by Ministry of Education and on the other hand on an practical educational position – primarily the students, secondly the teachers. Theoretically Bourdieus theory of Habitus, Capital and field is the main point of departure (Broady 1991)

**Highlights of the historical development of VET in Denmark.**

Until 1857 Vocational education and training in Denmark was placed in what was known as guilds. The guilds held a privileged position as they had monopoly on both the training of the apprentices, on performing the actual craft and on the determination of the charge. An apprentice was seen as a member of the masters’ household and the master took up not only the education of the apprentice but also the task of teaching the apprentice manners and behaviours suitable for a craftsman. In 1857 legislation was passed that removed the privileges and monopolies from the guilds, installing the market as regulator. The background was partly a general liberal politic and economic movement in Europe, partly a realisation that the privileges of the guilds were obstructive towards both the economic development and to the idea of liberalisation of the labour market. An effect of the removal of the privileges of the guilds in terms of the monopoly to train craftsmen was the introduction of Technical Schools. Those were in the beginning established to compensate for those still more important qualifications that was not necessarily offered in the traditional apprenticeship like reading and writing, offering the students courses after working hours. Additionally drawing was an important element in the education at the technical schools. In another perspective the introduction of the technical schools represents the introduction of what can be termed a “scholastic logic” in the education of craftsmen, and as such the actual start of what is an important feature of the organisation of VET in Denmark; the principle of dual education, where the students alternate between educational periods in technical schools and periods at a workplace. In 1956 a reform of VET introduced education at technical schools in daytime and hereby defining the school
based parts of VET as an equal important part of the education. The 1973 Reform put even more emphasis on the scholastic parts of VET, as it prescribed an organisation where the students started their education with an introductory period of 1 year duration at a technical school (Sigurjónsson 2002, Hastrup 1979, Møller 1991). The latest reform of VET in Denmark, known as Reform 2000 expresses how the scholastic elements has gained the dominant role, at least for the educational planners (ie. the Ministry of Education representing a bureaucratic logic – as I will return to) in the planning of VET. A mere glance on the principal departmental order of Reform 2000 shows that there are 10 sections in details describing the school based parts of the education whereas there are only two, with by and large no substance, describing workplace based parts of the education. The general impression of the departmental order is that it deals with VET as if it is an education, which primarily takes place in schools. In reality the largest parts still takes place in practice. (Ministry of Education 2000).

**Developmental trends in educational politics in Denmark**

VET in Denmark is in a process of transition from an educational system mainly founded upon work based learning towards the inclusion of still more school based learning. The focus is shifting from specific qualifications directed towards specific crafts and specific tasks in the direction of a focus on broad competencies not necessarily with a material or practical basis. In general educational politics in Denmark is still more founded upon the following characteristics:

**Economic considerations.** The central question asked to any part of the educational system is: “Does it pay of”? This regards first and foremost if the single education profitable in terms of cost and benefit. Regarding VET the ambition is to plan the educational process in such a manner that it is able to fulfil the varying demands from the labour market. Secondly schools are bound up upon contracts specifying the relation between the production, in terms of fully qualified students, and funding. It means that there are limitations regarding uptake in some crafts within VET whereas others are rewarded for increased uptake. From the point of view of the technical schools educations are planned with a maximum reduction of costs. A number of so called progressive pedagogical initiatives can be understood as a consequence hereof; “Responsibility for own learning” is in that respect a useful tool, by which it in a
legitimate way can be argued to have classes with no teacher present. A phenomenon still more often occurring in VET in DK.

**Adaptability to the demand of the labour market.** The educational system is engaged in a process, where the aim is to be able to supply whatever the labour market must demand at any time. To fulfil that ambition “Flexibility” is a central feature of the educational politic. The ambition is to create such a flexible educational system, that any change in market condition can be responded to by the educational system.

Another feature, which is perhaps the one with the most serious effects on the educational practice, is the organisation of modulised educations. Following the ambitions of Reform 2000, the student must compose his or her individual education choosing from a number of modules. The implicit expectation is that the student is in fact able to make the right choices and that the school is able to provide. The Reform 2000 can be seen as an expression of an upgrade of those qualifications that are necessary in order to continue an educational carrier after the students has left VET. In reality it a constitution of the primacy of the scholastic perspective to a practical perspective, in other words a primacy regarding those qualifications and abilities that are preconditions in order to deal with school based educations, also within the field of VET. As such VET follows a developmental path that is found generally in the educational system. The status of the single education is determined by its degree of scholastic and theoretical elements for which reason educations come to stand in a competitive relation to one another in which the pivotal point is theory and “school” (Munk 2001).

**Educational focus on the Individual and on the personality of the individual.** To fulfil the above mentioned educational politics are directed towards the single individual of the educational process. It is a tendency that is found not only in VET but also in other parts of the educational system, for instance in the basic schooling system, where the pupils are requested to create their own individual plans of instruction from the day they starts school. A plan that is to be evaluated and revised twice a year. In VET in Denmark each student is equipped with a supervisor, together with who the student is supposed to plan his or her own individual education. Additionally Reform 2000 prescribes preparation for further education, development of comprehensive competencies, ability to choose on basis on rational calculations etc. as important educational goals.
Following the departmental order (Ministry of Education 2002 as a starting point one is able to construct the characteristics of what can be termed the implicit idea of a “normal VET student”. He or she is characterised as having education and work as the pivotal points in life, - is equipped with broad occupational competencies, - is flexible and prepared for changes in private- and work life, - makes its choices on basis of rational thinking, - is competent to choose from a very large selection of possibilities and first and foremost the “normal VET student” has life stretched out in front of it as a lifelong project; Lifelong learning as the main purpose of life itself.

Outline of a construction VET as a field.

In order to theoretically grasp the described development I am applying the concept of “field” as developed by Bourdieu. Following Bourdieu, “The fundamental scientific act is the construction of the object” (Bourdieu 1991: 248). In other words, to break with the pre-construction, that is the spontaneous and obvious representation of the social world, the researcher must construct the scientific objects for the investigation. If not he will be able only to reproduce the social world a it is already produced as a collective work of constructing social reality and thereby prevent himself to add new knowledge to the object of the research. In order to make an analysis of a field you must be able to point to the different positions of the field. A position of a field is determined by the practical understandings of the specific interest of the field, with the illusio, representing the tacit recognition of the stakes of struggle of the field (Bourdieu 1990). The illusio of the field of VET preliminary be formulated as: What is the best Vocational Education and Training system? The answer depends of the specific interest of the single position. To illustrate this point I will sketch out a number of positions within the field. I must stress that this is not a genuine analysis of the field:

The Technical Schools: To the technical schools VET is their mere reason of existence. They have an objective interest of the principle of dual education, as it is the reason for their partaking in VET. Economic considerations are in the forefront of the schools practical handling the educational process. A general reduction in costs is practically realised with introduction of “responsibility for own learning” as it makes
it possible to conduct teaching without the presence of a teacher. Introduction of E-learning, which is seen still more frequently, also makes it possible to reduce costs. New school buildings are raised and old schools are modernised following the principle of “open learning centres”. The didactical argument is that students can learn not only from the teacher, but also from other students for which reason learning in open centres are the most profitable. Economically it is not such a bad idea either, as you can have just a few teachers for a large number of students. The most striking example I have come across was 3 teachers for 120 students in an open learning centre. In that sense “student” to the technical schools are equivalent with funding, as schools are funded from the state on the basis on the length of the period they attend schools. Objectively the schools have an interest in the prolonging of the students school periods, where the opposite is the case for the factories and firms.

To the Factories and Firms VET is on the one hand the precondition for securing the supply of well-trained labour. This means that they have to make training places available. On the other hand having VET students in apprenticeship is also a cost for the companies and firms for which reason the number of practice places is decreasing every year. The principle of dual education is from the point of view of the companies and firms a misplaced intervention in what they see as an educational process, which at the end of the day is best carried out in the firms and companies. An unpublished report from an investigation among 200 companies and firms engaged in VET concludes that they do not find the technical schools necessary and therefore they do not see the technical schools as an partner in the educational process (CEU 2002).

To the bureaucratic position, as expressed by the Ministry of Education, a VET student is first and foremost defined as a piece of raw material to be processed and the task for the educational system is to process this piece of material into flexible and adaptable manpower, in order to secure the national economic development. In other words; the bureaucratic position in practice treats the students as something which is to become something else, and further more the goal of the educational process lies first and foremost outside the student themselves. Following the same bureaucratic logic VET is one part among others of the educational system, a practice that can be regulated by passing legislation, the students can be directed in whatever direction wanted and the general behaviour, in the broadest sense of the notion, can be
regulated and directed towards those goals that at any time might in the forefront of the political agenda. And the principle of dual education is the practical precondition for the State having any influence on VET.

A particular interest is found regarding “Youth” which can be found consulting the large body of publications surrounding Reform 2000. Following researchers like Giddens (1990, 1991, 1999) and the German Thomas Ziehe (1983, 1998), “Youth” is seen as being set free of tradition and culture, individually preoccupied with the creation of their own identity, and they tend to choose their educational pathway if it can be of any use in their identity work. The idea that constructing identity is a main element in young peoples life is not in it self a new feature. But when it is considered to be something special, that young people do as an intentional task, and they do it freed from social and cultural bonds, it becomes in itself a problematic idea. And when educational planning takes this idea of conscious creating your own identity as if you went shopping at the “Identity Supermarket” as the basic feature, it becomes a real problem. My own research points strongly towards the fact that most of the students basically are using VET in order to enable themselves to live the life they know from their own cultural and social background, even if they, when sometimes asked, might answer that they want to become actors, artists, or creative director in an advertising agency.

Following the same logic one is able to construct the students as a position within the field of VET. I shall display this part of the construction somewhat more detailed than the other positions. The construction of the students as a position is done on the basis of some of the results from the questionnaires initially mentioned. The questionnaire was distributed to 1274 students in VET, representing the entire educational progress. A main consideration regarding the selection of crafts represented in the investigation derives from the observable development in most of the crafts with which VET are aiming at. That is a change in the actual work because of the technological development, the industrialisation of construction etc. In some cases crafts are dismantled while new crafts arise. In that sense you can say some crafts “has the future behind” while some crafts “has their future ahead”. The final selection of crafts involved in the investigation was determined to be Carpenter (n=352), Metalworker (n=267) and Plumber (178) representing traditional crafts and graphic designer (n=55) and computer mechanic (n=79) as representatives for the “newcomers”. 92% was
male which rules out the gender issue. Notable though 55% of the graphic designers are female. The rate of response was 75%.

The short version of the story is that there is a strong influence of social inheritance in the students’ choice of education. 76% of the fathers have either no education after finishing basic education or they themselves has finishes a vocational education. To the students themselves VET is an education you can choose because it makes it possible to you to work professionally within the craft the education is aiming at. The students have chosen their education as a \textbf{mean} aiming at a specific well defined \textbf{goal} – even it might show that reality does not meat their expectations.

The students consider themselves as the pivotal point around which the education exists and the educational system must meet his or her expectations. Those are:

- The expectation to realise an “adult life” based on the job the education can provide.
- The students’ thinks of their education as directed towards a well-defined future on the labour market enabling them to establish themselves with a house and a family.
- The dual educational system is to the students a structure that they cannot escape. The school-based parts of the education are the least important part while “the real stuff” is found in the companies and firms, where the practical parts of the education take place. Additionally the technical school is important because you can meet with friends and eventually spot a girlfriend……

Of course there are variations and contradictory points of view among the students, but the points mentioned above represent the vast majority of the population.

The development of VET presented above illustrates on the one hand a societal necessity to adjust vocational education and training to structural, economical and political development in society in general. On the other hand it is an illustration of a power struggle of the legitimate right to define what can be termed “the best vocational education and training”; a struggle primarily between the traditional educational logic, represented by the guilds and to some extend even today carried on by firms and companies involved in dual education, and a bureaucratic logic represented by the Ministry of Education. Further more it is an example that the introduction of school based parts, which is the precondition for the existence of the principle of dual education, at the end of the day expresses a conflict between a bureaucratic and a practical position in the field of VET. A conflict of interests, at
first with the an aim to establish the bureaucratic logic as the most powerful position in the field, secondly enabling bureaucratic logic to be the predominant logic according to which other positions must subjugate. A theoretical and analytical consequence of this development is, that what at first glance seems to be a didactical principle, dual education, in fact turns out to be an accepted and legitimate mean, with which bureaucratic logic can establish itself as the dominant position in the field of VET.

This very short analysis points towards further considerations, which are to be subject to further investigations:

What are the consequences of the apparent discrepancies between the bureaucratic concept of “student” and what my investigation shows as the students in practical education? On the one hand you can claim that equipping students with only limited qualifications aimed at a specific craft leaves them with great risk of being excluded from the labour market, if their qualifications are no longer needed. On the other hand: planning educations as described above holds a potential risk of excluding those students who can not comply with the still greater demands of broad competencies aimed at lifelong learning in school-like environments. Does an educational system, which in fact narrows in the definition of the ”normal individual”, have a potential excluding effect? And if so what are the effects concerning societal marginalisation. The latest report from the Danish Economic Council (2004) states that there is a still grooving part of young people (17%) who does not finalise an education after basic education, and that this group will have even more difficulties in the future as the demands of formal qualifications is expected to rise. This directs the focus towards the reasonable idea of planning an educational system, in this particular case VET, which does not match the students, actually involved. But when implemented, is more likely to exclude them from even getting a chance.

References
Bourdieu et al. (1992): Invitation to a Reflexive sociology. Polty
As the process of recoding and preparing data for correspondence analysis is not yet finished the following is based on simple frequencies and cross tabulations.