

Mass-individualization of higher education facilitated by the use of ICT ¹

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In this presentation we will borrow from a business concept called 'mass-individualization' which accounts for a change in consumer market conditions towards extreme heterogeneity and unpredictability. In a short exercise we will apply and convert the main ideas behind this new business concept to the world of education and learning. First we develop a 5-scale typology for consumer markets in general. The education and learning market appears to have a very characteristic position in this typology. Next we translate the main features of mass-individualization to education. The preference for a 'flow' (rather than 'batch') principle, for example, converts into a preference for a learning model that we may call 'open' in many respects. And the concepts of 'atomization' and 'navigation' give rise to the use of so-called 'learning units', spanning a large 'learning space' which requires guidance in a rich diversity of 'flexible learning tracks'. Clearly ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is required and indeed instrumental in order to bring these perspectives within reach. Some examples of ICT application benefits will be touched upon.

1. Dieser Beitrag erscheint wortgleich im Tagungsband der 10. Europäischen Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Medien in der Wissenschaft e. V. (GMW05)