

INDIVIDUALISATION OF STUDENTS' LEARNING IN GRADES 5-8: EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS

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Abstract. *The article analyses the experiences of teachers in general education schools in the field of individualisation of students' learning in grades 5–8. It theoretically discusses individualised learning strategies based on the guidelines of universal design for learning approach and teachers' abilities in selecting approaches to individualise students' learning. The implementation of individualised learning requires an increasing amount of theoretical and practical preparation of teachers in order to facilitate students' individualised learning. Teachers, therefore, need to explore innovative strategies and approaches to meet the broad and ever-changing learning needs of their students, to diversify their methods and to create dynamic learning experiences for their students. The analysis of the qualitative research findings has revealed that: teachers' experiences of individualising students' learning are varied, conditioned by the ability to know the personal characteristics and abilities of the student; teachers' experience of individualising teaching is characterised by a collaborative approach to dialogue and reflection; teachers' insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their ability to individualise students' learning; and teachers' insights into practical experiences of using the methods of individualisation.*

Keywords: *general education teacher, learning methods, individualised learning, teachers' experiences.*

Introduction

In the 21st century, every school-age student is expected to be able to read critically, write with reasoning and logic, evaluate themselves and choose a career path. To this purpose, a strong emphasis is placed on individualising learning to adapt it to different characteristics and needs of students. Customisation of teaching to the needs of students has highlighted the characteristics of the individualised approach to the student (Helmke, 2012). Individualisation is not only based on the pupil's individual cognition, but also includes the content,

methods and techniques of teaching, i.e., the whole framework of the teaching and learning process (Šiaučiukėnienė et al., 2013). There are various scientific definitions of individualised learning. However, according to Hughey (2020), it is most often associated with a student-centered approach, student agency, flexible learning, demonstrated mastery of competencies, and a holistic perspective to the whole child. According to this author, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences and Self-Determination Theory, as well as the humanistic approach, represent a framework of human motivation and personality and are based on the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. All of these are connected to the instructional approach to effectively facilitate individualised learning. A combination of all this provides an additional perspective of including data-informed decision making to create a personal development layer with a personal vision and assessment (Hughey, 2020).

Individualisation of learning remains relevant because it addresses the different capabilities, goals, preferences, interests, etc., of learners, where learning activities, instructions, guidance are linked to individual needs and encourage active engagement in learning activities and content development (Kurilov, 2018; Giota et al., 2019). The relevance of individualised learning is enhanced by the characteristics of the modern generation of students, which is characterised by individualism, creativity, activity, the ability to perform several tasks or actions at the same time, the difficulty of concentrating, the desire to obtain a quick result, the rejection of authority, innovativeness and other features (Kvieskienė & Kvieska, 2018). Individualisation of learning, as it is points out in the framework and guidelines of UNESCO (2020), includes several key aspects of effective learning: shared responsibility for learning between the student and the teacher; knowledge of the student's personality; engaging the student in the process by linking learning to experiences and aspirations, ensuring motivation to acquire new knowledge and skills; a collaborative culture based on participation and engagement in the learning process; and the effective use of information technology to provide an individualised learning infrastructure and appropriate learning resources. Individualised learning can occur in a variety of settings and formats. Technology has provided greater opportunities and mediums for meeting learner needs. The ability to individualise learning with flexible environments has been a game changer for education. Hughey (2020) states that the synthesis and development of information technology eliminates the barriers preventing the sharing of information and knowledge, as well as the learning boundary.

Individualised learning encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and achievements, orienting the education system towards the learner, changing their role from consumer to collaborative partner and creating a unique learning pathway (Kvieskienė & Kvieska, 2018). The learner and the teacher are encouraged to work more closely together, with an emphasis on learner autonomy and engagement in deep learning, which contributes to

individual learning experiences and better learning outcomes (Monkevičienė et al., 2014). Facilitating individualised learning requires more flexibility from educational institutions, moving from education for all to education for everyone, i.e. individualised learning. Educators, therefore, need to explore innovative strategies and approaches to meet the diverse and ever-changing needs of learners and create dynamic learning experiences (Oddone et al., 2019). An experienced teacher with appropriate and deep competences is able to mobilise learners to work, even if they are very different in terms of experience, motivation, inclinations, interests, aspirations, abilities, level of achievement, etc., which results in different learning needs (Kondratavičienė, 2018). According to Radović et al. (2021), individualisation of learning as a didactic principle is considered in the context of the requirement that all students should be given optimal educational opportunities according to their individual abilities. The didactic system of individualised teaching is defined as a type of didactic organisation in which teachers' educational work is adapted to the individual abilities, aptitudes and interests of students.

Although individualised learning is a progressive process, there are also challenges: students do not always know what they do not know—they need to know the next steps in their learning in order to create an individualised pathway, and the teacher's role and functions should not be underestimated; the teacher needs to be able and willing not only to teach, but also to support learning, which requires knowing the students, their personal characteristics, and their individual learning styles and techniques (Deakin Crick et al, 2013; Oddone et al., 2019). The scientific literature identifies the problems of individualised learning and the reasons behind them: inappropriate teaching methods and a lack of didactic and motivational competences of the teacher (Biggs et al., 2011; Olsen, 2011; Bray & McClaskey, 2012; Felder & Brent, 2015, etc.); failure to identify students' individual characteristics, learning styles, and approaches and to select appropriate methods (Deborah et al, 2014; Hendry et al., 2015, etc.); lack of knowledge of the essence of individualised learning, its technologies and benefits (Campbell et al., 2007; Kondratavičienė, 2018, etc.); inappropriate learning methods, tools, lack of attention to independent work (Mayer, 2017; Giota et al., 2019, etc.); and other.

The research-based assessment of the problems and facilitators of individualised learning suggests that this learning can help to overcome learning difficulties of students related to the choice and application of learning methods, the implementation of more varied, targeted and effective learning activities, and the development of teachers' competences. Therefore, the desire to find out the importance, opportunities and difficulties of individualising learning, the methods used by teachers to meet the needs of students, and the importance of teachers' preparation and qualities has led to the *research problem*: what are the

experiences of teachers in facilitating the individualisation of the learning of students in grades 5–8?

The aim of the study is to analyse teachers' experiences of individualisation of students learning in grades 5–8.

Research methods: theoretical analysis, document analysis, qualitative research (interview), content analysis.

Methodology

In order to reveal teachers' experiences of facilitating the individualisation of students' learning in grades 5-8 a qualitative research strategy has been chosen, which allows for a detailed analysis of people's experiences. "Qualitative research helps the researcher to better understand the human condition and human behaviour in different contexts and situations" (Bengtsson, 2016, p. 8). The theories of pragmatic and humanistic learning (Bitinas, 2013) were used as a basis for the study. These were applied to provide an interpretative, holistic view of the problem under analysis, the experience of the research participants, and the explanations that emerged from the situational analysis. The study was carried out by using a semi-structured interview method. The interviews aim to understand the phenomenon "from the inside", i.e., from the perspective of the research participant (Gaižauskaitė et al., 2016). In line with the aim of the study, the interview questions were designed to elicit teachers' experiences of facilitating the individualisation of students' learning in grades 5–8.

The interviews were conducted between September and November 2023. The data collection was based on purposive, criterion sampling. The main criterion was teachers' experience in facilitating individualised learning of students in grades 5–8. Teachers from different general education institutions in the country agreed to take part in the study: 9 of them were women and 2 men (N=11); the average age of participants was 43 years; average professional experience was 16 years. The research is based on the following principles: respect for the individual's free decision to participate in the research; information about the research; introduction to the purpose of the research, the method of data collection and the procedure of the research; goodwill and a willingness to do no harm to the subject; confidentiality and anonymity (Wiles, 2012). All participants took part voluntarily and freely; they were informed about the purpose of the research, the process, their rights to stop the interview at any time, not to answer questions they did not want to answer, to control the amount of information they wanted to share, etc. Participants were reassured that the information obtained during the study would only be used for the purposes of the researchers and the study. The participants' statements have been transcribed and included in the overall text of the interviews, so their identities cannot be decoded. The timing of the interview was agreed with each participant. The interviews lasted

approximately 60 minutes in direct contact with the participant. The interview was recorded with the consent of the participant.

Analysis of the qualitative research data. The data were analysed by using a qualitative content analysis. The analysis of qualitative data was carried out in several stages: 1) preparation of the data collected during the interviews for analysis by grouping them into separate groups; 2) selection of the unit of analysis by selecting a phrase as the unit of analysis, which reveals the attitude of the participant to a particular issue; 3) creation of subcategories and coding scheme; 4) summarisation of coded material by presenting the content of the coded texts in tables. The data were analysed by four researchers. The analysis of the units of meaning led to the creation of subcategories, which were obtained by heuristic means: reading the text and abstracting the information expressed. The subcategories were then grouped into a series of categories. Based on the keywords, 4 main categories were identified: the definition of individualisation of students' learning; teachers' ability to recognise students' personal characteristics and their abilities; the strengths and weaknesses of teachers' ability to facilitate individualised learning; and practical insights from teachers' experiences of selecting and applying individualised learning methods.

Research results

The analysis of the data focused on different views of participants, which were based on their practical experiences of individualising teaching for students in grades 5–8. It was relevant to find out how teachers understand the individualisation Facilitation of the students' learning in educational activities and what interpretations of the definition of individualisation they give on the basis of their pedagogical experience. Although all participants of the study acknowledged that individualisation is an important factor for the success of every student's education, in actual practice, individualisation of students' learning is understood differently. Table 1 presents the participants' definitions of individualisation of students' learning.

The participants' reflections (Table 1) show that they understand the essence of facilitating the individualisation of students' learning, but that they interpret the concept in terms of their own personal experience in this area. The results of the survey showed that participants tend to break down the definition of individualisation of students' learning into different parts. This indicates that the experiences of the research participants are diverse in this area and do not provide a complete picture of individualisation of learning.

Table 1 Teachers' definitions of individualisation of students' learning
(compiled by authors)

Category	Subcategory	Confirmatory statements
Definition of individualisation of students' learning	Getting to know the student's personality	"<...> taking into account the individual abilities of each student, thus creating the right conditions for learning, developing various abilities <...> - this, I believe, is the essence of individualised education" (P4); "<...> Taking into account the student's needs, personal qualities, abilities in the delivery of the educational content <...>" (P8); "<...> Taking into account the student's experience, knowledge, abilities <...> when organising the educational process" (P10).
	Student involvement in learning	"<...> I allow the student to initiate their own learning because it produces results <...>" (P11); "<...> Together with the student, you can not only achieve the objectives of the general education curriculum, the acquisition of competences, but also the development of personal qualities and cognition <...>" (P2); "<...> When you make the teaching student-centred, the student not only achieves the goals of the learning <...>" (P5).
	Integrating special needs of students	"Individualised education is for children with special educational needs <...> so that they can learn together with other students" (P1); "There is a need for individualised curricula for students with special needs in order to educate, integrate <...> them" (P6).

To implement individualised learning, there are obviously a number of challenges for the teacher: with limited time resources, the teacher must know each student, their strengths, weaknesses, needs, interests, be able to design the curriculum in such a way that the student is able to learn according to their own needs and abilities, and be able to properly organise and assess their own independent learning (Oddone et al., 2019). During the study, participants highlighted the importance of knowing students' personal characteristics, abilities, needs, and learning styles as helping them to individualise their learning more effectively. Participants stated that "<...> If you take into account the needs, abilities, and experiences of a student, they have fewer learning difficulties and failures <...>" (P3); "<...> Knowing the personal characteristics and abilities of a student enhances their motivation to learn, and promotes their academic performance and fairness <...>" (P8); "<...> If you know your student, if you know their learning styles, you can make their learning more successful <...>" (P4); "When I know my students' learning needs, I can understand my students, build on their strengths, reduce their weaknesses, and help them to learn more successfully <...>" (P6). However, although the participants stated that they are trying to get to know all the students, their personal characteristics, abilities, and

needs, even though in the classroom there are “<...> ... students with different abilities, needs, so it is difficult to take into account all of them <...>” (P4), they are not always able to do this in the educational process. It was, therefore, relevant to find out what challenges the participants face (Table 2).

Table 2 *Teachers’ challenges in getting to know their students (compiled by authors)*

Category	Subcategory	Confirmatory statements
Getting to know students	Lack of time and resources	“<...>I am always trying to find out about the abilities of all the students, their personal qualities, <...> there are so many students, the content is broad, I don’t have enough time to do this <...>” (P2); “I am trying to at least pay attention to those students who have learning difficulties <. ..>, to find out how to individualise their learning so that it is effective, but I don’t always succeed” (P7); “How to find time to give equal attention to all, to choose teaching methods according to their abilities, learning needs <. ...>” (P11); “<...> When there is a lack of time and I need to introduce important theory, but <...> my students don’t like such lessons <...>” (P6); “When you are trying to find out students’ learning needs, you run out of time, and you don’t always find the right tasks and tests <...>” (P9).
	Teacher’s workload	“How to manage to get to know each student’s needs and learning difficulties, when the pace is so fast, when there is so much to give to and to share with students <...>” (P5); “<...> next time you are just giving a general lesson to everybody, you don’t make sure you’ve chosen the right methods of teaching and learning, or the right ones to fit the class, because you don’t have the time to get to know everybody well <...>” (P10); “<...> When the goal is to impart knowledge, but not to develop skills <...>” (P8).

The findings of the study showed that a comprehensive understanding of the student, their personal qualities, abilities, and learning needs, according to the participants, is limited by their excessive workload, lack of time and resources. The experiences of these participants revealed a lack of teachers’ competence in individualising learning in practice. However, they tended to attribute their lack of competence to problems of organising the educational process, the content, and the excessive demands placed on the teacher.

The teacher needs to be able to use a variety of innovative learning methods to ensure that every student is able to learn at different levels and content, and to be able to help the student to achieve the goal, to discover a passion for acquiring new knowledge and skills, but also to think critically, build relationships, and so on (Felder & Brent, 2015, etc.). In this research, we aimed to find out what skills a teacher should develop and improve to successfully individualise students’ learning (Table 3).

Table 3 Teachers' existing and developed skills in individualising students' learning
(compiled by authors)

Category	Subcategory	Confirmatory statements
Teachers' capacity to individualise students' learning	Adapting teaching content to the learner	“<...> Getting to know the student, adapting the teaching content to the learner, <...> finding a common ground with the student and with their learning <...>, this is the teacher's most important ability to do a good job” (P8); “<...> enriching the teaching content with subjects that are relevant to the student <...>” (P9); “<...> To be flexible, to be able to orient the teaching content of the to the individual needs and abilities of the students <...>” (P4); “<...> You take everything into account, first of all, the child, and then you put the teaching content in the way that it should be put together. You look at the child, you know the children quite well, you know what they are capable of and how much they are capable of, and then I adapt and individualise their learning according to that” (P11).
	Student motivation, responsibility for learning	“<...> I give tasks that encourage the student to think, to do them themselves <...>” (P9); “<...> ... To teach independence <...> that motivates success” (P1); “You choose learning materials, methods that liberate the learner the most to reinforce learning, encourage the use of strengths and the improvement of weaknesses...” (P6); “<...> I adapt for each student so that they can look at their own progress <...>” (P2); “I adapt tasks so that students not only succeed but also want to <...>” (P4).
	Appropriate teaching methods, strategies	“One of the ways of selecting teaching methods is by getting to know the class <...>” (P4); “<...> I choose different methods to achieve the most effective level of learning and development in the class <...>” (P11); “<...> I always think about whether the methods will help to engage the whole class <...>” (P9); “<...> There is a wide variety of methods to choose from for individualisation; the most important thing is to choose the right ones <...>” (P6); “<...> Finding out what the students' needs are helps to select the methods <...>” (P2).
	Relationships based on trust	“An atmosphere of trust in each other is not only about getting to know the student, but also about helping them to learn <...>” (P3); “Positive emotions create a trusting relationship <...>, and are important for the individualisation of learning” (P9); “Nothing saves the day in a communication situation like a smiling teacher who is always calm and always speaking calmly <...>, only this doesn't always work (P4).

The findings of the research show that teachers are responsible for the success of every student's learning and need to continuously improve their existing and new skills in facilitating the individualisation of the learning of students. For the participants, the success of the student's learning is very important, which implies the teacher's ability to select the right content and teaching methods. Research (Kurilov, 2018) has shown that individualisation is the most important factor for successful learning, and it determines learners' motivation, commitment, learning attitudes, etc. The learner becomes the most important participant in education, and the teacher's role and functions change during the educational process.

The teacher is no longer the sole and infallible holder and disseminator of information, but the student's helper, selecting from the wealth of information what is reliable, relevant, valuable and interesting to each individual student. This is illustrated by the following participants' statements: "<...> *The teacher plays the role of a consultant, a helper <...>*" (P2); "<...> *I help the student to better absorb new material, to use it <...>*" (P8); "<...> *I encourage the student to think, to do it by himself <...>*" (P9); "<...> *I help the student understand how he learns best <...>*" (P4). This shows that participants are aware of their new role and function in the learning process. Scientific literature (Deakin Crick et al., 2013; Oddone et al., 2019) has highlighted that student diversity allows teachers to choose a wide range of teaching and learning methods, tools and activities in the classroom, to make them interesting and engaging, which helps students to experience learning success, to avoid severe learning difficulties and to enhance motivation to learn. This study reveals that it is essential for the individualisation of each student's learning that the teachers were able to use didactic and learning methods and tools to ensure the success of students' learning. The participants identified the following didactic and learning methods and tools: brainstorming, explanation, concept map, problem solving, jigsaw, problem solving by using the method of trial and error, case studies, puzzles, competitions, skits, self-assessment and individual questionnaires, games, independent work, project activities, etc.

However, the study notes that not all teaching methods help students to learn successfully. Students do not just have to reproduce and memorize the teacher's information, the textbook, the formulae, without making any effort to understand the learning material, but they have to focus on the meaning of learning, i.e., to understand the given learning material, to investigate, to compare, to express their own opinions, to argue, etc. (Felder et al., 2005). The study found that the participants are aware that different approaches need to be used according to the predominant areas of students' learning abilities. They say: "<...> *learning methods should be used to encourage students to go deeper into the material, to understand the limits of their own knowledge and experience, to think, to learn to express themselves, to share their knowledge with others <...>, which helps to get*

them to apply all of this to their individual learning” (P6). Teachers identify only certain teaching methods that help to individualise students' learning according to their levels of knowledge, understanding, thinking, ability to work together, etc. (Table 4).

Table 4 Teachers' identification of teaching methods to individualise students' learning according to their different learning levels (compiled by authors)

Category	Subcategory	Confirmatory statements
Learning to understand the meaning of objects, phenomena, concepts, etc.	Mind Map	“<...> I use methods where the information is conveyed through visuals, such as “Mind Map” (P10); “Drawing a “mind map” allows students to understand the interrelationships and interdependence of objects and phenomena <...> it allows knowledge to be absorbed visually <...>” (P2).
	Concept Map	“<...> I encourage students to draw diagrams themselves to remember the information <...>” (P11); “<...> I often use visual representations of information: graphs, charts, tables, maps <...>” (P3).
Learning how to express ideas, opinions, debate, argue, think, etc.	Interview	“<...> I make use of their well-developed auditory memory by using different verbal methods such as interviews <. ...>” (P4); “<...> Teaches students to present their ideas, answer questions <...>” (P5); „<...> It helps to clarify needs and develop communication skills <...>“ (P9).
	Brainstorming	“<...> I use brainstorming to develop listening and speaking skills <...>” (P3); <...> For those who do not dare to express their thoughts out loud to the whole class, the ‘Rain of Thoughts’ is useful <...>” (P1);
	Discussions	“<...> I use discussions, I give them the opportunity to listen because they like it <...>” (P5); “<...> I make it possible to listen to discussions, dialogues <...>” (P7); “<...> Like those students who learn and learn about the world through active participation <...>” (P4)
	Debates	“<...> Enjoy debates, speeches, talks, sharing experiences <...>” (P11); “<...> Encourages independent questioning and critical thinking, listening to oneself and others <...>” (P8)
Learning through practical experience in collaboration, etc.	Projects method	“<...> The projects method helps to take into account each child’s learning ways, styles, abilities, possibilities and needs <...>” (P8); “<...> This method allows the topic to be understood and mastered in an individual way of learning <...>” (P6); “<...> Public presentations are very useful, because not only do they learn, but they also teach their classmates <...>” (P3)

	<p>Working in groups</p>	<p>“<...> It is useful for everyone because it develops a variety of skills: communication, analysis, decision-making, public speaking, critical thinking, reflection, evaluation of one’s own contribution and the work of the group <...>” (P8); “<...> It encourages people to share their experiences, to learn from each other <...>” (P11); “<...> My students are used to working in groups, they like it, because if one of them doesn’t understand, the other one explains it to them <. ...>” (P1)</p>
	<p>Pairs in a collaborative way</p>	<p>“<...> It is enjoyed by those with weak skills, they need a supportive friend <...>” (P7); “<...> It is enjoyed by those who know how to communicate, cooperate, especially the method of ‘Mutual Learning’ and ‘Jigsaw’ <...>” (P10); “<...> Those who are inclined to talk like pair work <...>” (P9); “<...> Useful for all, but especially for students who receive information through their feelings <...>” (P6)</p>

As shown in Table 4, the participants understand that the success of students' learning depends on the appropriate choice of learning methods. Appropriate methods help students to develop missing skills, to actively engage in the learning process, to meet their learning needs, and to individualise their learning. However, the experiences of the participants in the study reveal not only the strengths but also the weaknesses of the learning methods used. Some of the answers were: “<...> There is not always time for discussion and not all students discuss <...>” (P5); “<...> Only those enjoy who like to listen and talk <...>” (P11); “<...> It’s difficult to involve, to ask everyone, others just passively participate and listen <...>” (P3); “<...> Some students are very afraid of such tasks <...>” (P1). This shows that although teachers claim to want to get to know the students well and to select methods according to their personal characteristics, abilities and learning styles, they often simply apply different methods to the whole class of students, stating that “<...> It is useful for everyone, even for those who are not actively involved, but still hear what is explained <...>” (P6). Thus, the appropriate choice of learning methods depends on the teacher’s ability to get to know all the students well.

The individualisation of learning through *information technologies* as a learning tool was also found to be relevant and strongly supported by the research participants, as it meets the learning needs of all students, with particular emphasis on the visualisation and demonstration capabilities of the digital whiteboard. The research participants say: “<...> Learning without digital technologies is not possible today as it meets the needs of all students <...>” (P10); “<...> It is enjoyable and suitable for everyone, and you can communicate and collaborate effectively with your students <...>” (P11); and “<...> The use of IT engages

students of different learning styles in an interactive way, and allows anyone to learn effectively <...>” (P7). Studies (Miller et al., 2015) have shown that presentations delivered by using a digital whiteboard in the classroom are more comprehensible and stimulate students’ interest. Teachers can experiment with the digital whiteboard, making it easier to engage students in their learning, tailored to the needs of each student. For all today’s students, information technologies open up a wider range of learning pathways and, at the same time, opportunities for individualised learning in terms of time, space, reflexive interaction and feedback, learning content and process. This is highlighted by the participants in their statements: “<...> *I use the SMART Board because there is the possibility of making a recording of the lesson, which will make the information re-usable, and it will be better for all the students to absorb it <...>*” (P8); “<...> *I use the digital board for showing videos, websites, solving tasks <...>*” (P4); “<...> *The virtual survey is suitable for different styles of learners, and can be carried out with computers, tablets or phones via Moodle or Kahoot <...>*” (P6); “<...> *IT applications such as Compendium, FreeMind, Freeplane, Pimki, SciPlore MindMap-ping, WikkaWiki, VUE, XMind, etc., are great for concept mapping <...>*” (P9); “<...> *I use the digital application Mozaic Education, which engages everyone because of its demonstrativeness and interactivity <...>*” (P5). Thus, the participants’ practical experiences show that the use of information technologies and the organisation of lessons in a virtual space offers opportunities for individualised learning through factors such as flexible time and space, reflexive interaction between students and teachers, collaboration, individualised learning content and learning process.

Thus, we can say that the participants of the research have accumulated a considerable amount of knowledge in the practice of facilitating the individualisation of the learning of students in grades 5–8. However, teachers’ experiences are more in the stage of ‘I know and I am able to’ (i.e., how, in what ways and why individualisation of learning is needed), than the stage of ‘I know how and do’ always in practice. The participants are able to identify the main aspects of individualisation, to identify their expression, to identify the competences required for them, and to identify and describe individual practical situations of facilitating the individualisation of the learning of students. However, in real practice, individualisation is fragmented when it comes to knowing students, their personal qualities, abilities and needs, and trying to select the most appropriate learning methods and tools for the content.

Conclusions and discussion

Individualisation of students learning remains relevant not only to ensure that each of them is motivated to engage in the learning process, but also to develop the ability to learn independently and achieve personal success in learning,

according to their individual abilities, interests and learning needs. Therefore, the teacher has a huge responsibility as the implementer of individualisation of learning, whose professionalism and understanding of their new role in the process of teaching determines the success of learning of each student. Similar conclusions are drawn by S. Poteliūnienė et al. (2019), whose research has shown that the implementation of educational content, the individualisation of the educational process, and the pursuit of quality, efficiency and productivity remain some of the main challenges for teachers in practice.

From the perspective of the participants' personal experiences, the assessment of the concept and expression of individualisation of students' learning in real situations of learning reveals a view of individualisation that does not always coincide with the way it is expressed in theory. Individualisation of learning, based on the informants' narratives, is related to knowing the student; the student's orientation to take responsibility for learning; adapting the learning methods, ways and means to each student's abilities, needs and interests, where each student can feel and be valued as an equal participant of learning. R. Deakin Crick et.al. (2013) also point to the teacher's knowledge of students' personality and personal history as an important moment in facilitating the individualisation of students' learning. The research has highlighted that the perception of individualisation of learning is not fully understood and well defined by the research participants due to different interpretations of the concept, and is, therefore, not fully realised in practice. Experiences of individualisation reveal real-life learning situations in which research participants do not always facilitate the individualisation of each student's learning because they do not have a good understanding of each student's personal characteristics, abilities, needs and interests. During the interviews, the participants identified the challenges that prevent them from doing so: lack of time and resources, excessive workload, which indicate a lack of professionalism among teachers. The strengths identified by the research participants as their capacity to individualise learning are difficult to realise in practice and teachers, therefore, need to continuously develop these skills. J. Hughey (2020) discusses the revised role of the teacher in individualised approach encouraging educators to assume the role of facilitators, guides, and coaches. In individualised learning educators need to become the leaders to support learners search for finding their own knowledge.

The limitations of qualitative research in assessing the individualisation of students' learning in grades 5-8 are related to the inevitable subjectivity of qualitative research. Although the design and conduct of this type of research has met these requirements, the generalisation and applicability of the findings is partly limited by the small number of participants. It is the results of the qualitative research that are unique and specific to the individuals involved. While it would be wrong to apply the findings to all teachers, it is likely that the reflections on the experiences of the teachers of this study have revealed the complexity of in

facilitating the individualisation of the learning of students, which requires teachers themselves to be professional in order to get to know each student, and to develop their own skills to enable them to share responsibility with students and to select appropriate learning methods, techniques and means that reflect the individual abilities, needs and interests of each student. The findings of the study allow us to foresee further research into this phenomenon in order to find out the opinions of general education teachers through quantitative research.

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