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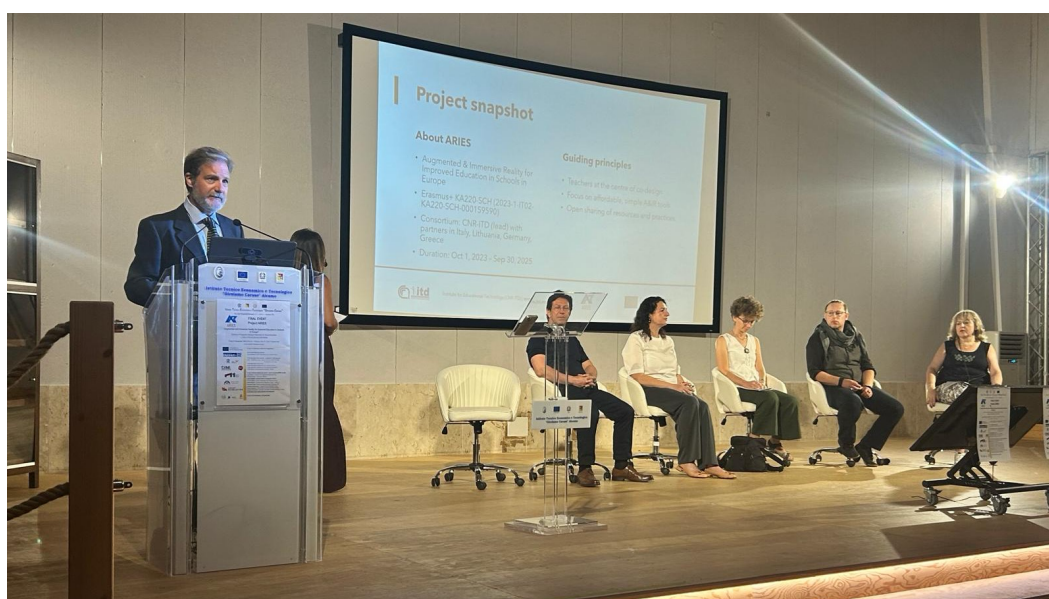


Augmented and immersive Reality for Improved Education in Schools in Europe ARIES

Erasmus+ Cooperation partnerships in school education
2023-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000159590

ARIES Final Event

Friday 26 September 2025 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at the “R. Corso” Congress
Hall of the Institute “Girolamo Caruso”, Alcamo (ITALY)



This special edition newsletter recaps the ARIES Final Event and outlines everything a secondary-school teacher needs to use Augmented and Immersive Reality (A&IR) tomorrow, in real lessons, with real students. You'll find a concise overview of the project, a tour of the Support Hub, snapshots from the six pilots, highlights from students' joint learning activities, and crucially, how schools and systems plan to valorize (exploit, certify, network, and sustain) these results.

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ARIES in one page: what, why, and for whom

What is ARIES?

An Erasmus+ cooperation partnership that has built low-threshold, low-cost ways for teachers to integrate Augmented & Immersive Reality into everyday teaching. It couples a competence framework, CPD pathway for teachers, certified student modules, and an open Support Hub with tools you can use on ordinary devices.

Why it matters for schools:

- Pedagogy first. AR brings abstract ideas to life; IR enables safe, virtual experimentation; both drive active learning and competence development (critical thinking, creativity, problem solving).
- Feasible now. Content can be authored and run on mobile devices and no expensive headsets required.
- Recognized learning. Courses for staff and students are certified, with LEVEL5 competence validation and badges/certificates for e-portfolios.

Who was involved:

A cross-European consortium led by CNR-ITD with partners in Italy, Germany, Greece, and Lithuania, including ITET “Ghirolamo Caruso,” Model EPAL Trikalon, Šiaulių Didždvario gimnazija, BLINC, and Smart Revolution.

Inside the Final Event: structure and speakers

The half-day conference opened with a project introduction (Marco Arrigo, ARIES Coordinator, CNR-ITD), a guided tour of the ARIES Support Hub, pilot showcases, the Joint Students Learning Activities (with awards), and a roundtable on valorization and sustainability. Speakers included school leaders, researchers, and policy/industry partners from across Europe.

Roundtable contributors:

- Vincenza Mione — Headmaster, ITET “G. Caruso”
- Francesca Pozzi — Director, CNR-Institute for Educational Technology (ITD)
- Laura Daricello — National Institute of Astrophysics, Palermo (INAF)
- Carmen Catalina Rusu — “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati
- Davide Taibi — Coordinator of the AIR project, CNR-Institute for Educational Technology (ITD)
- Roman Sarpanov — Šiauliai TECH: Center for Technical Creativity
- Dimitrios Theocharis — Education Consultant, Secondary Education, Trikala

The ARIES Support Hub: your new home base

Think of the Hub as an open academy + project showroom + mobility matcher + simple authoring suite, glued together around competence development and validation.



Four sections teachers will actually use:

- 1) Learning Suite – ready-to-use CPD modules for facilitators, learning materials, and project templates; with introductory videocasts on A&IR pedagogy, facilitation, and tools.
- 2) Virtual Exhibition Space (the Inspiration BoX) – a living gallery of student projects and educator approaches, plus a help desk/FAQ and a space to match community partners to school projects.
- 3) KA1 Matching Platform – discover and post mobility offers (courses, conferences, job-shadowing) in A&IR, linking your CPD to Erasmus+ pathways.
- 4) ARLectio for Schools – a simple, low-cost authoring tool and player for building A&IR experiences that run on phones and tablets.

Under the hood:

The Hub integrates open-source Moodle, synchronous collaboration for Design-Based Collaborative Learning (DBCL), and LEVEL5 for competence validation, so you can plan, deliver, and certify learning in one ecosystem.

What the pilots proved (Italy, Germany, Greece, Lithuania)

Between March and May 2025, partners piloted the ARIES approach in real schools across four countries. Each pilot localized A&IR activities to curriculum needs, proving the model's adaptability.

CNR – Istituto Tecnologie Didattiche piloted ARIES in Palermo to make both STEM and the humanities tangible. One unit used Adobe Aero/HaloAR to explore the periodic table, atomic structure, and ionic bonds; another turned Leopardi's *Il sabato del villaggio* into layered AR scenes that helped students visualize metaphors and themes. Together, these activities strengthened conceptual understanding and creative interpretation across subjects.

At ITET “G. Caruso” in Italy, two Learning Units embedded A&IR into a technical high school curriculum. “AI through A&IR” led fourth-year students from research to prototyping AR learning objects with Adobe Aero and CoSpaces, while “BitByBit” used immersive tools to explain analog-to-digital conversion through a small game world. Both units boosted collaboration, presentation skills, and hands-on creation with everyday devices.

Model EPAL Trikalon in Greece ran a broad suite of pilots across mechanics, humanities, IT, and art. Activities ranged from “Detachable Connections,” tourism timelines, and Python conditionals with CoSpaces on Merge Cube to literature and culture units like Ithaca, “Karyatides,” and “Persephone's Nightmare,” plus Arduino basics. The results show how AR/IR can drive inquiry, creativity, and cross-curricular links in both vocational and general studies.



Šiaulių Didždvario gimnazija in Lithuania blended AR/AI with English, art, and math. Students built an AR city-murals map with RealityMax and Sketchfab to narrate local culture in English, created advertisements using AR + AI, and explored 3D-shape cross-sections with GeoGebra AR and Merge Cube. These tasks improved digital storytelling, language use, and spatial reasoning.

BLINC – the Blended Learning Institutions Cooperative in Germany worked with Hainberg-Gymnasium on two pilots. A scale-model Solar System in Adobe Aero let students “walk” planetary distances and connect AR exploration to Kepler’s laws, while the “Forum Romanum Multimedia Rally” used location-triggered content to deepen Latin through place-based experiences. Engagement rose markedly, and teams identified pragmatic fixes for connectivity and setup.

Smart Revolution Srl adapted ARIES for adult education in the TRAIL project by inserting an A&IR exercise into a Travel Security module. In a Delightex-built virtual house, trainees identified items to assemble a personal “grab bag” for emergency evacuation. The scenario increased self-reflection and security awareness with minimal technical friction.

Why this matters to you: the pilots show that A&IR can be integrated into standard courses with ordinary devices, clear rubrics, and competence validation, not as a one-off gadget day, but as a repeatable method.

Students at the center: the Joint Learning Activities & awards

Timed with the final conference, ARIES convened a transnational, interdisciplinary cohort of 30 students (20 from the host school, 5 each from Greece and Lithuania). In DBCL teams, they co-designed prototypes and staged a treasure-hunt style challenge using the ARlectio platform, culminating in a public showcase and award ceremony.

The event followed ARIES’ “active conference” concept—keynotes + hands-on prototyping + valorization forum, ensuring dissemination translated into learning and making.

What teachers can borrow immediately:

- A 3-phase student journey (vision → ideation → prototype) with design thinking scaffolds and hybrid exhibition at the end;
- Embedded competence self-assessment + external observation using LEVEL5, generating badges/certificates for student e-portfolios;
- A motivating public finale (challenge or exhibition) to anchor accountability and celebration.

Valorization: from project outputs to school-wide change

ARIES didn’t end at “nice pilots.” Work Package 5—Valorisation laid out how the results are standardized, recognized, networked, and sustained across schools and systems.



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Key mechanisms now in place:

- Valorization Strategy & Tools: a planning scheme for integrating ARIES methodology and assets in schools; plus a platform feature to help local ARIES projects attract people and resources (a practical bridge to stakeholders).
- Repository of Certified Courses & Labeling System: CPD offers with common quality criteria and a European label for transparency, comparability, and recognition.
- Community Building via large-scale networking, agreements, and annual conferences to maintain momentum and expand the educator community.

Roundtable takeaways for sustainability (university & research links):

Participants explored how to embed ARIES in higher education (e.g., teacher-education modules, joint research), extend to national research infrastructures (e.g., institutes like INAF), and scale via a follow-on initiative in higher education (AIR), positioned as an evolution of ARIES to sustain and deepen impact beyond school level.

Evidence of reach and recognition

By design, ARIES targeted 18+ teachers in CPD, at least 30 students in the transnational cohort, and about 250 participants at the final conference, ensuring both depth in classrooms and breadth across the network.

What made ARIES different (and feasible)

- Low threshold: author, run, and assess with ordinary devices; no specialist labs needed.
- Method first: DBCL structures and competence frameworks keep A&IR at the service of learning, not the other way around.
- Validation built-in: LEVEL5 converts classroom activity into recognizable competence growth, transferrable into e-portfolios and future pathways.
- Pathways to sustain: the Hub, labeling system, repository, and network agreements channel results into ongoing CPD and school-wide adoption.

Credits

Warm thanks to Headmaster Vincenza Mione and the ITET “G. Caruso” team for hosting; to the students whose prototypes and reflections animated the final event; and to all partners for two years of intense design, piloting, and sharing across Europe.

ARIES—Augmented & Immersive Reality for Improved Education in Schools in Europe

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