

# PD Scholarships to Germany

By Ken Pow, Ashburton College, 2015



**ILEP:** *Please tell us a little more about yourself*

**KP:** I am the German teacher at Ashburton College. I have been teaching here for over thirty years, thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to enthuse my students about the language and culture. I have also taught English and Japanese at various times and was the Director of International Students for fifteen years. Earlier in my career I was a local contact for YFU exchange programmes, when they began operating in New Zealand. German has been my only teaching subject since the turn of the century. Many students have been to Germany with me on College trips and school has also hosted students from Realschule Kempten and Pascal Gymnasium, Grevenbroich over the years, giving students the opportunity to make friends with young Germans, many of whom remain friends today. Numerous students have been on the NZ-Germany student exchanges as well. Recently the College was confirmed as part of the PASCH school network and a benefit of this has been the Year 12 Language Scholarship available to two students each year.

**ILEP:** *Why did you choose to go on the Goethe Scholarship?*

**KP:** I went on the Goethe Scholarship, after being offered a place by the Goethe Institut as part of the PASCH programme. We had had students and senior staff benefit from the programme and the natural extension of this was for the teacher(s) to also benefit. As well as completing an advanced language course I had hoped to sit the C2 examination in Germany.

**ILEP:** *What did the Goethe Scholarship involve?*

**KP:** My course was a two week intensive language course at the C1-C2 level. We had lessons each day and a couple of evening engagements and in the middle weekend, an outing. The course covered the four skills, but also touched regularly on cultural aspects. There was some high level grammar work, which, I'm pleased to say, my local host found extremely demanding! Our group consisted of secondary school teachers and Goethe Institut teachers from Australia, Ukraine, Ireland, Romania, Korea, Russia, Turkey, North America and Hungary. Hardly a word of English was spoken during the two weeks, despite there being a number of native English speakers in the group.

**ILEP:** *What were 3 highlights of the trip?*

**KP:** Living in a flatting type situation in Schwäbisch Hall, working in German at a level bordering on C2 and having a first summer in Germany for over 25 years (and going to the Biergarten after classes)

**ILEP:** *How did you develop professionally through the Goethe Scholarship?*

**KP:** My spoken German has been brushed up. My tutor commented, that although my German was accent free, it was spoken as though I had had a beer too many (She even called it "Fußballerdeutsch" at one stage – which I took as a compliment!) and she was persistent in encouraging clearer diction. It confirmed my belief that German is a language well worth promoting and I frankly do not understand why so few schools in New Zealand offer it.

**ILEP:** *What ideas did you pick up in Goethe Scholarship that you will take back to your language classroom with you?*

**KP:** I will continue to promote the idea of sitting A1 – B1 exams and have begun planning for this. I am changing textbook approach away from bilingual books to DaF (Deutsch als Fremdsprache) texts from Germany. I have purchased a couple of interesting titles, three of which are based around games, and a book of Wodoku challenges – a form of word Sudoku. The most useful book (ie the one I have been able to use successfully, immediately) is 'Grammatik aktiv' from Cornelsen Verlag. This well-designed A1-B1 grammar explains the basic rules clearly with lots of straight forward practice examples. My students have enjoyed working with it as well. During the course we also revisited activities such as speaking wheels, repeated story-telling and how to use songs in lessons.

**ILEP:** *How do you think your participation in the Goethe Scholarship will benefit your students?*

**KP:** See above, however they have noted my increased enthusiasm, and can easily get me side-tracked by asking about my German Summer!

**ILEP:** *Would you recommend the Goethe Scholarship to other German teachers? If so, why?*

**KP:** Yes. I hope the reasons above would answer the why. However I would like to recommend a small town Goethe Institut over a major city if you want to have a fuller 'traditional Germany' experience. I just loved spending time wandering around a town, parts of which are unchanged since the 1500s, living and breathing its history.

**ILEP:** *Do you have any advice for future Goethe Scholarship participants?*

**KP:** Pack lightly, choose summer, immerse yourself and have a great time.

Of course I must thank the PASCH programme and the support of the Goethe Institut and in particular, Judith Geare. The organisation was just great. It was also made considerably easier for the College, knowing that the costs of teacher relief would be covered by ILEP. The Scholarship course has been a highlight of my career. Thank you.