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CHAPTER 1

What Are the Issues?

❧ *Dr Faustus* ❧

Wayne and I both arrived at the school on the same day. It was my first appointment as a secondary teacher and it was Wayne's first day in secondary school. Looking back on the small but significant incidents that occurred, I realise how much the 12-year-old taught me in a short period of time.

As a new class, we went through the usual *getting to know you* activities where the youngsters talked about their hobbies, their television interests, their reading habits – about anything that provided a basis for oracy activities, that broke down the barriers for 30 students who had come from different schools, that developed a sense of group co-operation and support. It was a fairly light discussion but, when it came to Wayne's turn, he quietly recounted the plot of Marlowe's play, *Dr Faustus*, referring to the way that Faustus traded his soul to the devil in exchange for a few pleasures, and ended with the agony of having "but one bare hour to live". His 10 minute description gripped the entire class and some of them spontaneously applauded him when he finished, much to his embarrassment. Over the next 11 months, his love of literature led him on a reading spree of 39 additional books, usually at an advanced level.

Wayne was an *accelerated learner* in both his reading and in his general knowledge. He thoroughly enjoyed learning about new topics, discovering obscure information and satisfying his own abiding curiosity. In a sense he