

***USING TOC WITH AT-RISK STUDENTS TO ENABLE THEM
TO THINK BEFORE TAKING ACTIONS***

In my class with middle school students at risk of failing, we were learning about the process of constructing a negative branch and the students were working on the first step: write the "incomplete solution: and then write down the negative effect that might result if you implemented the solution. Michael had "***I go to LA with a driver who doesn't have a driver's license***" written in the first box. (His friend had made the suggestion that they steal his dad's car and drive to LA...: they are all 13 years old.) I'm walking around the room checking with the students while they are writing. I pass Michael three or four times and he still doesn't have anything written in the top box. The next time I wander by, I ask him about his writing: "Hey Michael, need some help?" "I can't figure out what to write in the top box." So I read the bottom box and ask him, "What do you think would happen if you went for a joyride with your friend and no one had a driver's license?" He pondered deeply, sighed, and slowly said, "I don't know. But I DO know it would be really bad...This is the first time I ever thought about what might happen if I did something." (!) With the help of a driver's education teacher, Michael completed this Negative Branch. He decided not to go on the joyride.

