Whether it is becoming more of a problem or whether I am only now realizing what I think the problem is, a troubling trait that I see in many mathematics majors, even in upper division courses, is what Harel, et al., describe as a ritualistic understanding of proofs. This has led me to adopt in all of my courses for majors the course objective of students being able to observe, generalize, conjecture, and refine their conjectures. The problem with this objective is that learning these skills requires substantial formative feedback, but with traditional assessment methods, formative feedback is either not graded, and thus not valued by students, or by its nature punitive.

In their 2012 article, Brilleslyper, et al., discuss their implementation of a grading system that does not use points. Among the advantages they ascribe to their system are increased focus of students on learning rather than grades, increase in students’ intrinsic motivation, and alignment of learning experiences with course objectives.

In this talk I will discuss my implementation of a similar assessment program for our introduction to proofs class, with special emphasis on its effectiveness in helping students develop the skill of conjecturing. (Received September 17, 2013)