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How important is the final answer? : Using inquiry-based learning in an introductory proofs course.

Students enter their introductory proofs course accustomed to being able to check their final answers with others and in the back of the book. One of the greatest difficulties encountered in teaching proofs is helping students adapt to the idea that there are many correct answers. While in computation-based courses, most students can memorize algorithms and do satisfactorily on tests, a certain level of understanding is required to create a correct proof. While teaching my first intro proofs course and my first inquiry-based learning course, I often fought with when to assist students and when to let them struggle just a bit longer on a proof. The line between frustration and giving up can be hard to see until your students have crossed it. In inquiry-based learning classes it can be especially hard to figure out how to give input without positioning yourself as the authority on the subject. I will discuss my observations on the issue and what worked for my class. (Received September 17, 2013)