

Overview of Formality Labs for Debugging Failing Verifications

Purpose: These labs are designed for you to find, analyze, and solve common equivalency checking problems using Formality. You can use these labs to increase your awareness of Formality and to practice debugging skills.

Content: These labs use public-domain RTL source. The netlists were generated using Design Compiler F-2011.09 release software.

Procedure:

- There is a README file for every lab describing what to do.
- Each lab has a "runme.fms" FM Tcl script you can use initially.
- Each lab has a "hint" directory containing a README file if you need some helpful pointers on what to do.
- If you find that a lab is too difficult, there is a ".solution" sub-directory with the correct solution.
- Please compare your results with the correct results when you finish each lab.
- This lab document will guide you through each lab.

Invoke Formality in this manner:

```
"fm_shell -gui -f runme.fms |tee runme.log" or
```

```
"formality -f runme.fms |tee runme.log"
```

FM Lab1: Missing Verification Files

Objective: This lab shows an example of what happens in verification if pieces of the reference and implementation designs are missing and if guidance is missing. The focus of this lab is to review transcript messages. You need to change the "runme.fms" FM Tcl script to get a successful verification.

Lab flow:

1.) Run the verification using the existing "runme.fms" script.

2.) Finding clues to indicate potential problems:

2a) Transcript messages:

Formality debugging involves collecting information that may point to the reason why the design fails verification. Always look at the transcript messages first.

Note the following warning messages in the transcript:

```
Status: Creating black-box designs...
Created technology library 'FM_BBOX' in container 'r' for black-box designs
Created black-box design 'mAlu' in library 'FM_BBOX'
Warning: 1 blackbox designs were created for missing references. (FM-064)
Status: Attempting to resolve unlinked cells by using black-boxes...
Warning: 150 black-box pins of unknown direction found; see formality.log for list
(FM-230)
Top design set to 'r:/WORK/mR4000' with warnings
```

Formality is creating a black-box in the reference design to represent a missing piece of the design. The missing piece is "mAlu". Perhaps an engineer forgot to send over that portion of the RTL, or merely left it out of the FM Tcl script.

This transcript message is only a warning instead of an error because the customer included this variable setting in the FM TCL script:

```
set hdlin_unresolved_modules black_box
```

Otherwise, by default Formality would have stopped processing the design.

When faced with a missing piece of the reference design, you can either find the missing piece and try verification again. Or, you can try to black-box the equivalent sub-design in the implementation design, if the hierarchy was retained during synthesis.

3.) For this lab, you can find the missing RTL by quickly browsing in the "rtl" sub-directory and include the missing file in your FM Tcl script. Re-run verification.

4.) After running verification again, notice that the transcript still has these messages:

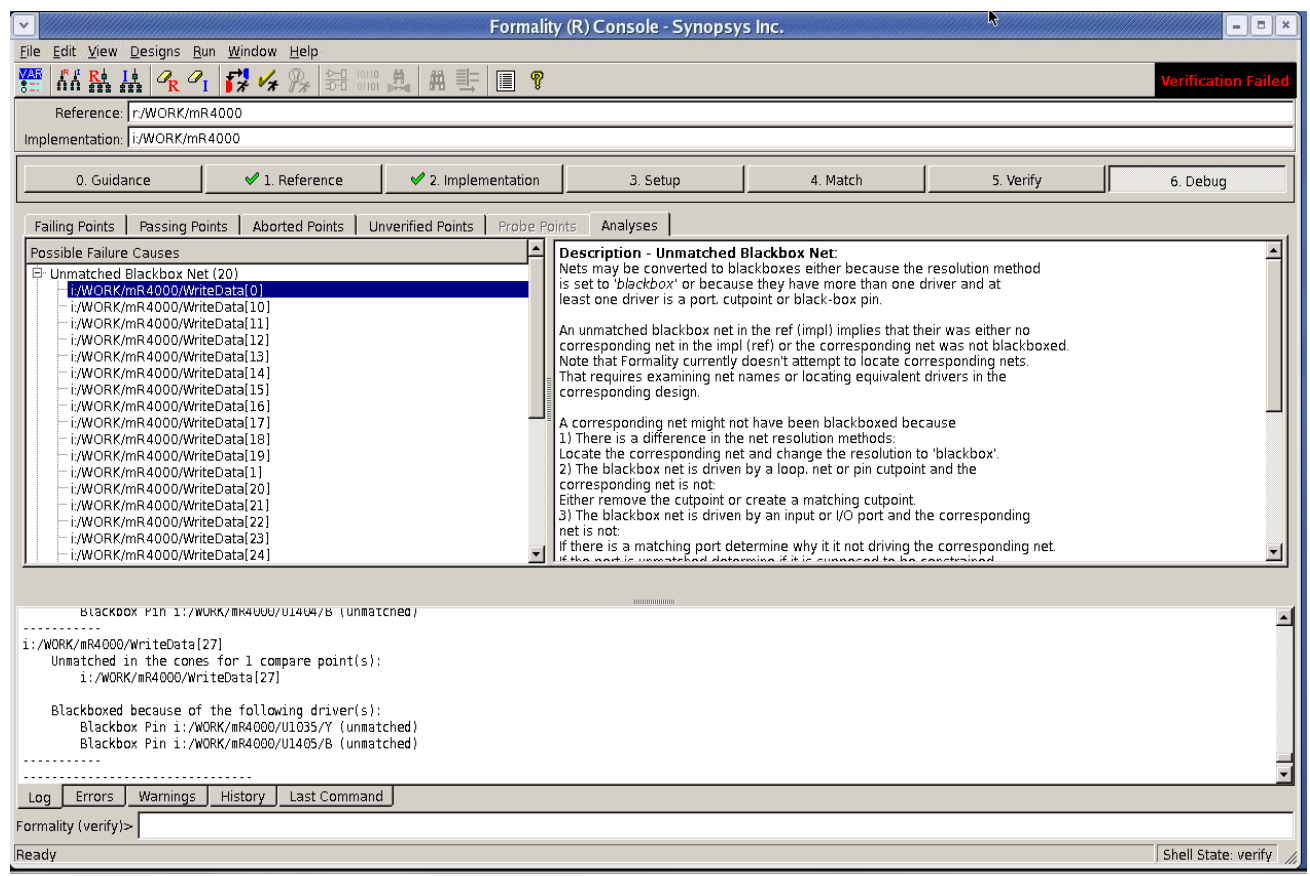
```

set_top i:/WORK/mR4000
Setting top design to 'i:/WORK/mR4000'
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U32' to its reference
design 'fa2a0'. (FE-LINK-2)
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U31' to its reference
design 'falb0'. (FE-LINK-2)
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U30' to its reference
design 'fa2a0'. (FE-LINK-2)
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U29' to its reference
design 'falb0'. (FE-LINK-2)
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U28' to its reference
design 'fa2a0'. (FE-LINK-2)
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U27' to its reference
design 'falb0'. (FE-LINK-2)
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U26' to its reference
design 'fa2a0'. (FE-LINK-2)
Warning: Cannot link cell '/WORK/mR4000/DP_OP_94J1_124_8045_U25' to its reference
design 'falb0'. (FE-LINK-2)

```

This indicates that Formality cannot find several library component cells for the implementation design. Formality is creating black-boxes for them. This is a sign that a library is missing from the setup.

5.) Since verification already ran, if you run the "Analyze" command, Formality will indicate that there are unmatched black-box nets in the implementation design that do not exist in the reference design. This is another indication of something missing in the implementation design.



6.) Find the missing library and include it in the FM Tcl script. Re-run verification.

7.) During this verification run, Formality located all of the design pieces and library information. However, verification is still failing. The only clue for this issue is the following statement in the transcript:

```
Info: Formality Guide Files (SVF) can improve verification success by automating
      setup.
```

You need to include the SVF guidance file in the FM Tcl script:

```
set_svf mR4000.svf
```

8.) Since there is no clock-gating nor scan involved, there is no additional setup needed. Auto setup mode is not required.

9.) Try verification again. You should now get a successful verification.

9.) You can automatically create a FM Tcl script by using UNIX command "fm_mk_script". Try the following:

```
fm_mk_script mR4000.svf
```

10.) View the resulting FM Tcl script "fm_mk_script.tcl", and try it out with Formality.

FM Lab2: Synthesis Pragmas

Objective: This lab contains Verilog RTL using Synopsys Parallel Case and Full Case synthesis pragmas. You must change the "runme.fms" FM TCL script to get a successful verification.

Lab flow:

- 1.) Run the verification using the existing "runme.fms" script.
- 2.) Find clues to indicate potential problems.

2a) Transcript messages:

Formality debugging involves collecting information that may point to the reason why the design fails verification. Always review the transcript messages first.

Note the following warning message in the transcript:

```
***** RTL Interpretation Summary *****
***** Design: r:/WORK/mR4000
full_case ignored (7 total, 1 with unspecified cases)
parallel_case ignored (7 total, 1 with overlapping cases)

Please refer to the Formality log file for more details,
or execute report_hdlin_mismatches.
*****
```

This is our first clue that there may be simulation/synthesis mismatches due to specifying full case and parallel case pragmas in the RTL.

2b) Messages from analyze_point commands:

Under the Debug tab, run "Analyze". Formality knows that the logic cones are different, but cannot pinpoint the specific problem.

In many situations where one compare point is holding a value while the other compare point is loading a different value, this is an indication of RTL interpretation differences between Formality and Design Compiler. It is likely that something like parallel/full case pragma interpretation is making a difference in the verification of this design.

3.) Resolve the RTL interpretation issue. You can set these variables:

```
set synopsys_auto_setup true
```

Or, set these:

```
set hdlin_ignore_parallel_case false
set hdlin_ignore_full_case false
set hdlin_error_on_mismatch_message false
```

4.) Fix up the FM TCL script and re-run verification. If you do not get a successful verification, view the .solution directory.

FM Lab3: Scan Mode

Objective: This lab contains an implementation design with scan and clock-gating inserted. You must change the "runme.fms" FM TCL script to get a successful verification.

Lab flow:

1.) Run the verification using the existing "runme.fms" script.

2.) Find clues to indicate potential problems and fix them.

2a) Transcript messages:

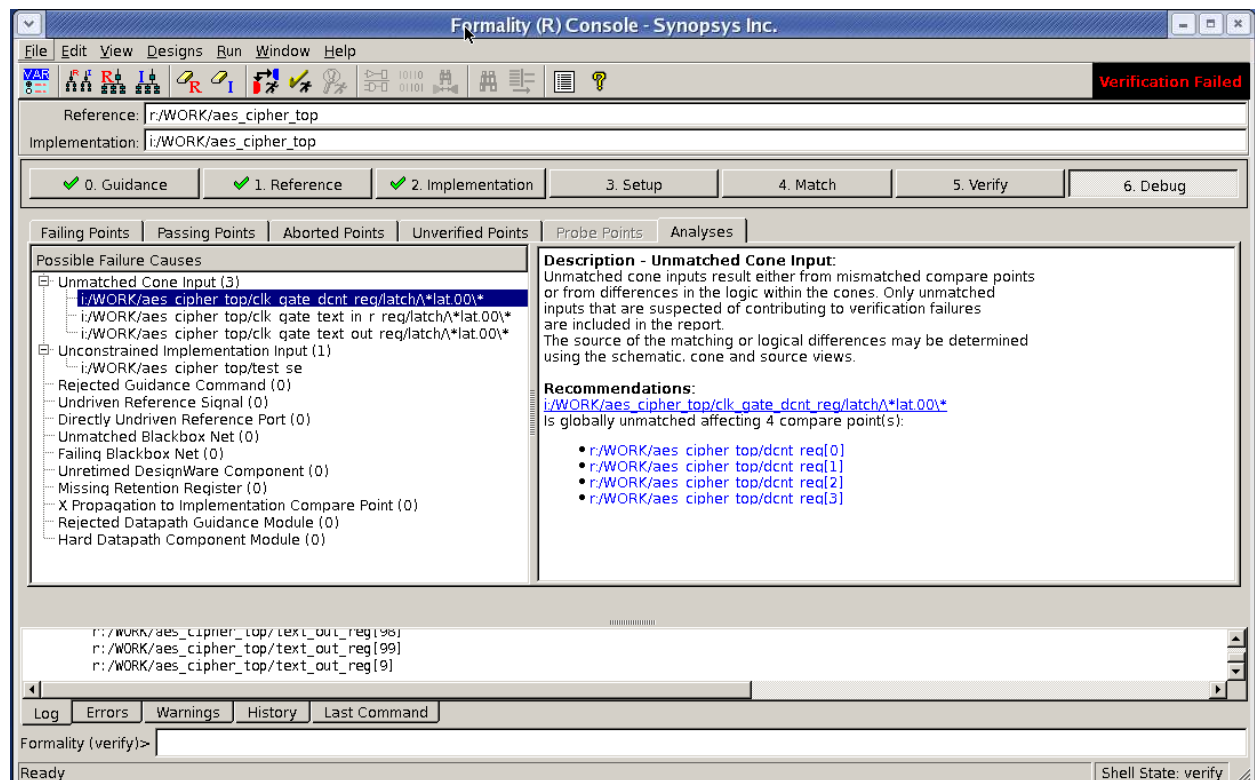
Formality debugging involves collecting information that may point to the reason why the design fails verification. Always review the transcript messages first.

Note the SVF Guidance Summary in the transcript:

```
***** Guidance Summary *****
                        Status
Command      Accepted  Rejected  Unsupported  Unprocessed  Total
-----
change_names :         2         0         0         0         2
environment  :         4         0         0         0         4
instance_map :         3         0         0         0         3
mark         :         4         0         0         0         4
reg_constant :        24         0         0         0        24
scan_input   :         0         1         0         0         1
uniquify     :        33         0         0         0        33
```

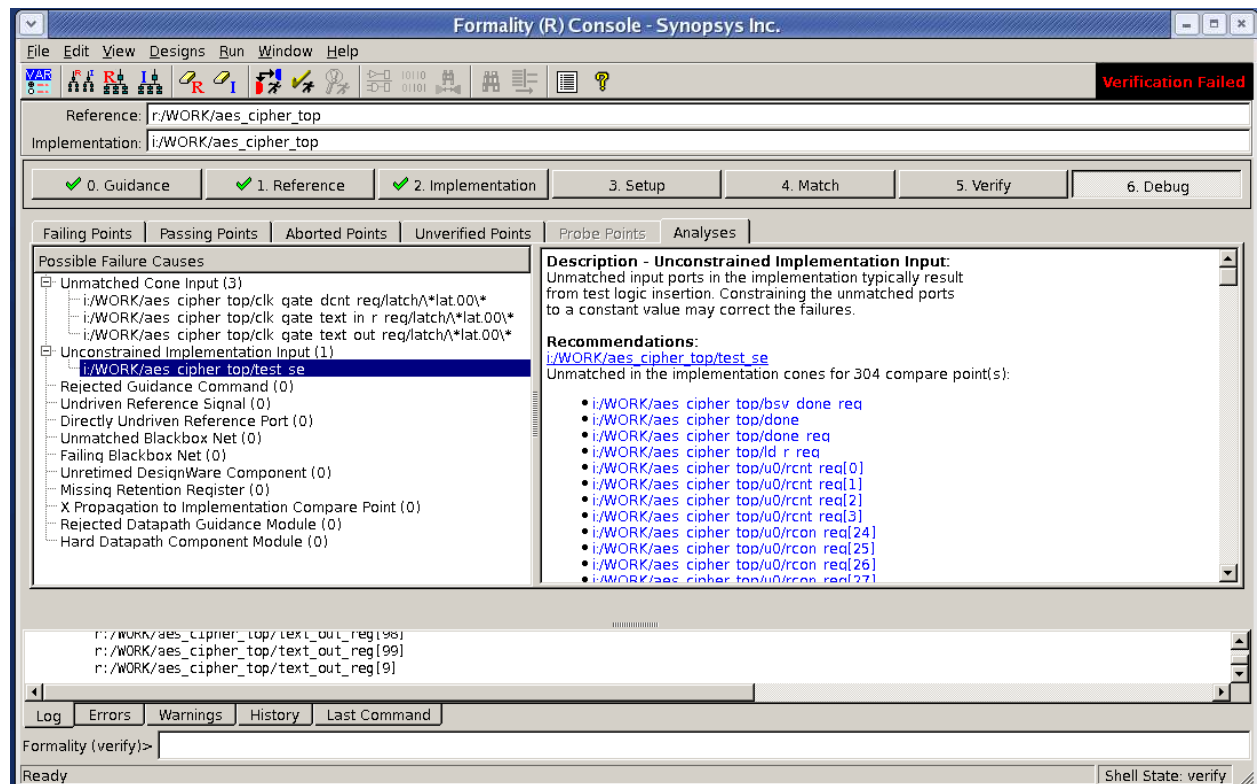
Unless the Auto Setup Mode is enabled, Formality will ignore scan_input guidance found in the SVF file. You will need to disable scan mode in your FM Tcl script. Continue on with the debugging first.

2b) Using the GUI, run "Analyze" on the failing compare points. You will see the following:



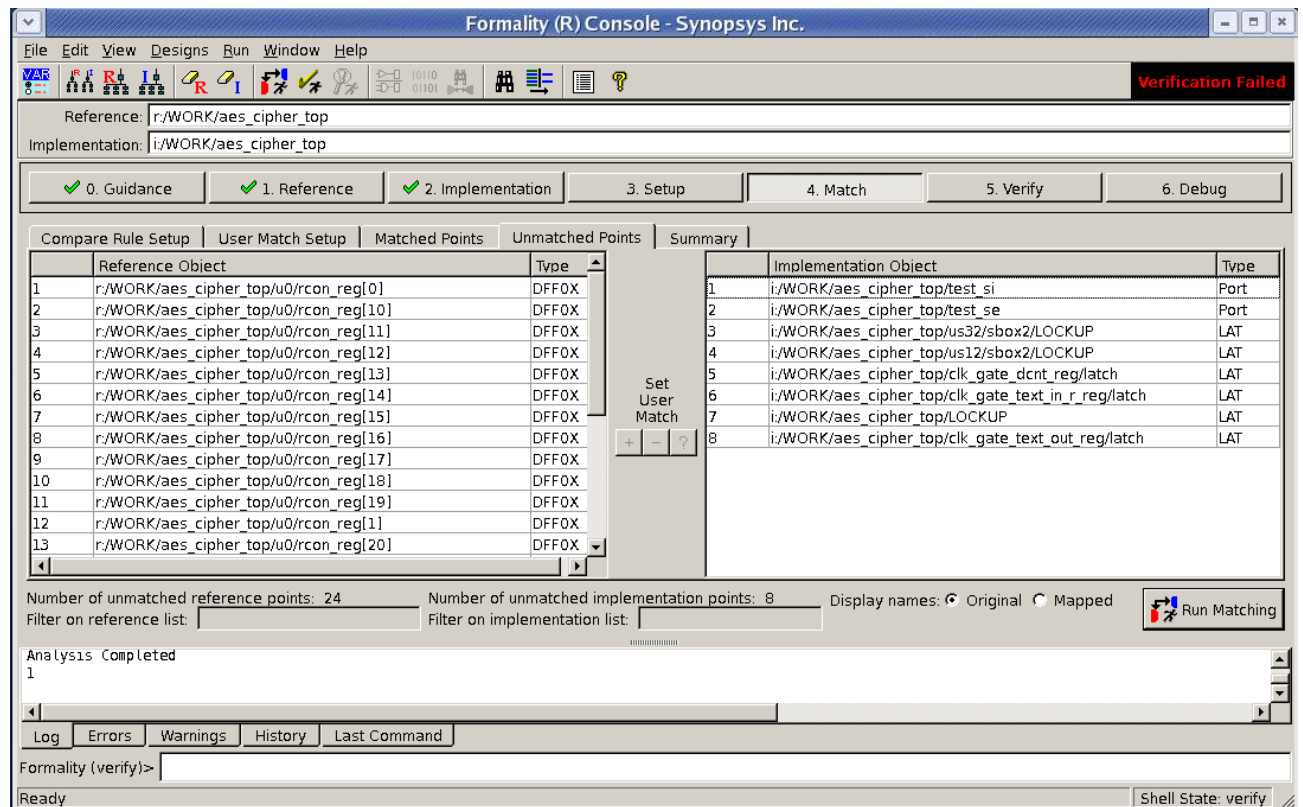
There appear to be two different problems with this verification.

The first is a list of unmatched implementation latches that are named "clk_gate_....". This is an indication that clock-gating is in the design. Since these are not recognized as clock-gating latches, it is probable that the variable "verification_clock_gate_hold_mode" was not set. So, Formality is treating these latches as compare points, and failing the verification.



The second issue is an unconstrained implementation input "test_se". From this we can assume that no constant was set on the test input to disable scan mode. This needs to be done to have a successful verification.

3.) Before changing the FM Tcl script, view the Match tab. Look at the unmatched points listed for the implementation design.



Again, note the unmatched input port "test_se" in the implementation design. This is an indication of scan in the netlist.

Also note that the "clk_gate_..." latches are of type "LAT" and not "CGLAT" denoting clock-gating latches.

4.) Set a constant on the test input as recommended by the analyze points command. Also, set the clock-gating variable to "low".

```
setup
set_constant i:/WORK/aes_cipher_top/test_se 0
set_verification_clock_gate_hold_mode low
verify
```

5.) Fix up the FM TCL script and re-run verification. If you do not get a successful verification, view the .solution directory.

6.) Note that if you use the Auto Setup Mode with "set synopsys_auto_setup true", Formality will automatically disable scan and turn on clock-gating. You would not have to do anything else for setup.

FM Lab4: Constant Register Recognition **(Modifying SVF File)**

Objective: This lab requires you to modify the SVF file so that Formality can recognize a constant register to successfully verify the design.

Note that this is a design contrived specifically to show an example of a naming issue between DC and Formality.

Key ideas:

a.) Practice using these Formality SVF debugging command:

- "analyze_points" with the option "-failing"
- "report_svf_operation" with the options
 - "-summary"
 - "-status rejected"
 - "compare_point(s)"

b.) Practice modifying an ASCII SVF file:

- Use your favorite text editor to replace DC name in SVF with the corresponding Formality name of the potentially constant register

Lab flow:

1.) Run the verification using the existing "runme.fms" script.

2.) Find clues to indicate potential problems.

2a) Transcript messages:

Formality debugging involves collecting information that may point to the reason why the design fails verification. Always review the transcript messages first.

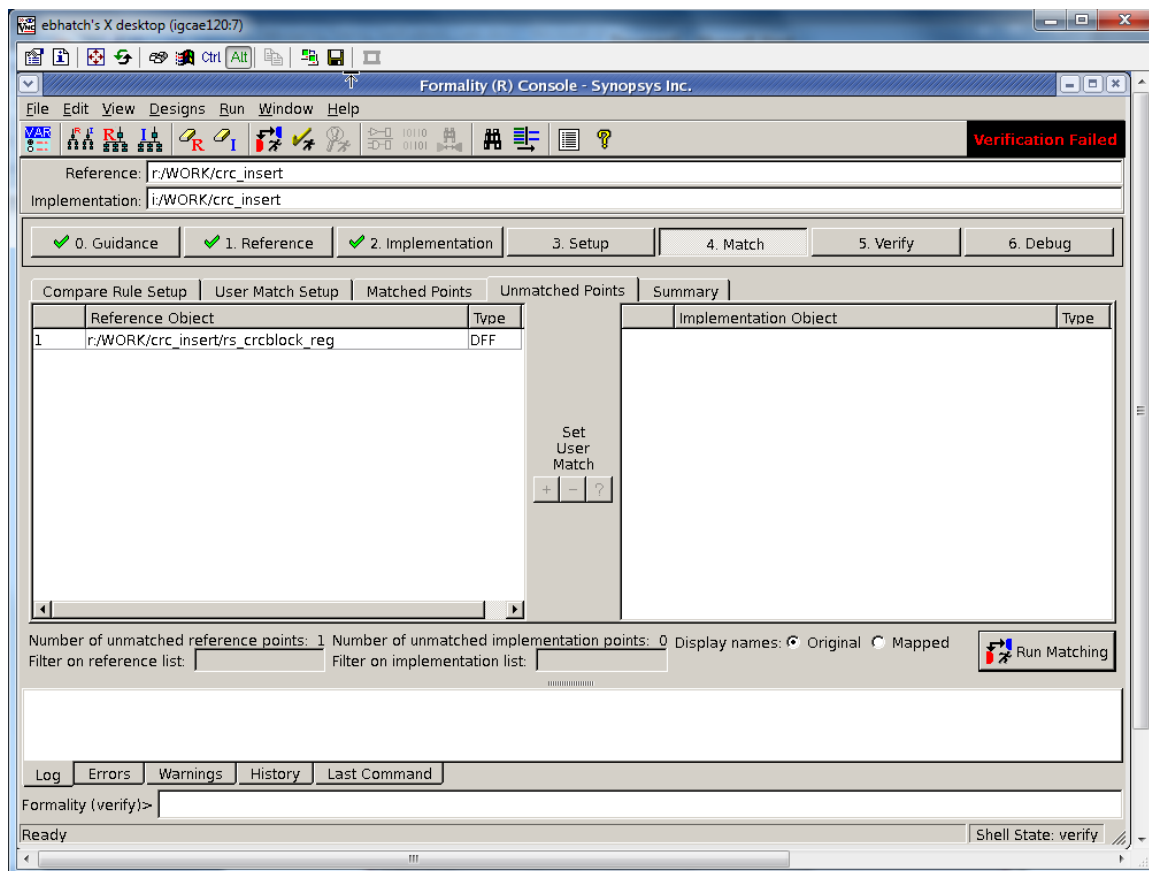
Note the SVF Guidance Summary in the transcript:

```
***** Guidance Summary *****
                        Status
Command      Accepted  Rejected  Unsupported  Unprocessed  Total
-----
change_names :         7         0         0         0         7
environment  :         3         0         0         0         3
instance_map :         2         0         0         0         2
mark         :         2         0         0         0         2
reg_constant :         0         1         0         0         1
uniquify     :         2         0         0         0         2
```

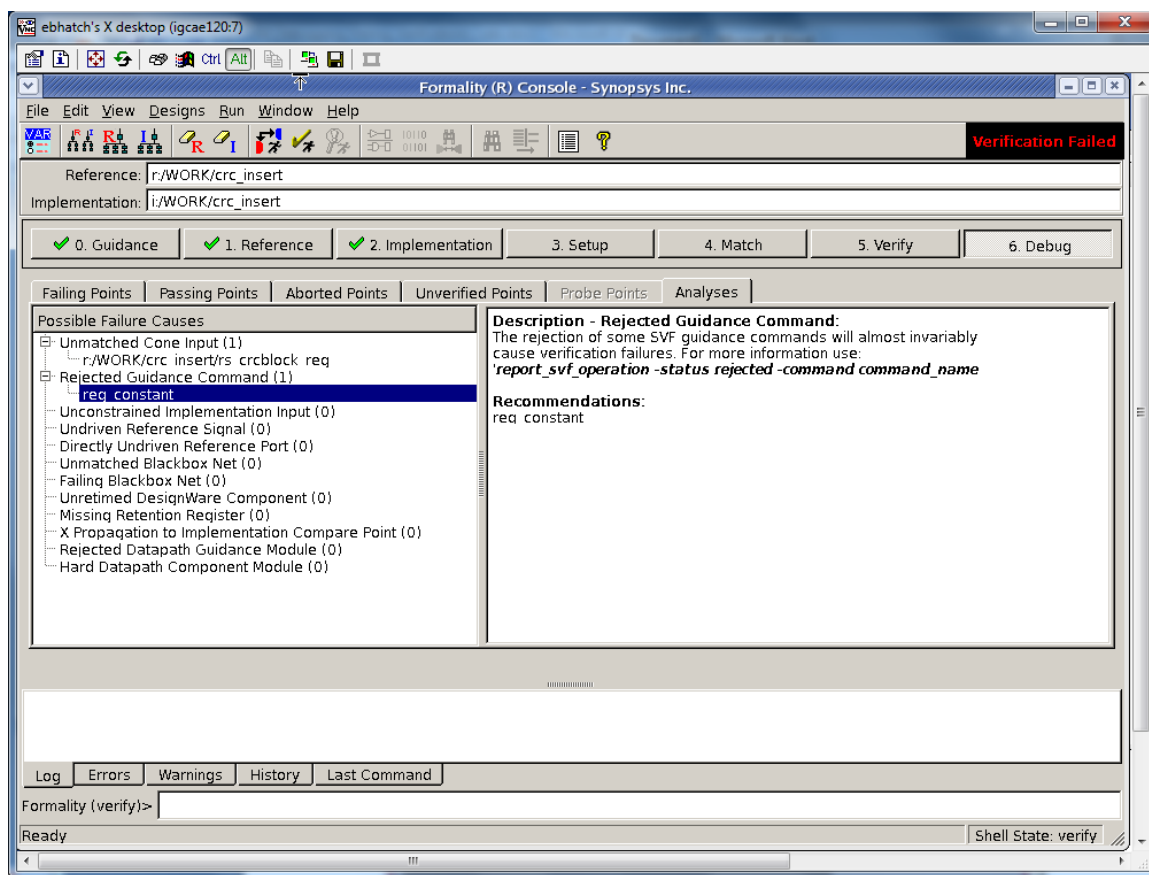
There is 1 rejected SVF guide_reg_constant operation. For several designs, this may be fine. Formality can figure out most constant registers; however, for this lab, this testcase will fail verification because this register is not recognized as a constant register.

This Guidance Summary table can be produced anytime after matching by using the command "report_guidance -summary".

2b) Here is a picture of the GUI unmatched points tab. Notice the single unmatched register in the reference design that does not exist in the implementation design. Sometimes this is fine. We need to confirm with using either the "analyze" command or the pattern viewer to see if this register contributes to failing compare points.



2c) Run "analyze -failing" on the testcase.



```
fm_shell (verify)> analyze_points -failing
```

```
***** Analysis Results
*****
```

```
Found 1 Unmatched Cone Input
```

```
-----
Unmatched cone inputs result either from mismatched compare points
or from differences in the logic within the cones. Only unmatched
inputs that are suspected of contributing to verification failures
are included in the report.
The source of the matching or logical differences may be determined
using the schematic, cone and source views.
-----
```

```
r:/WORK/crc_insert/rs_crcblock_reg
Is globally unmatched affecting 4 compare point(s):
i:/WORK/crc_insert/crc_block/S1/q_reg
i:/WORK/crc_insert/crc_block/S2/q_reg
i:/WORK/crc_insert/crc_block/S3/q_reg
i:/WORK/crc_insert/reset_crc4
```

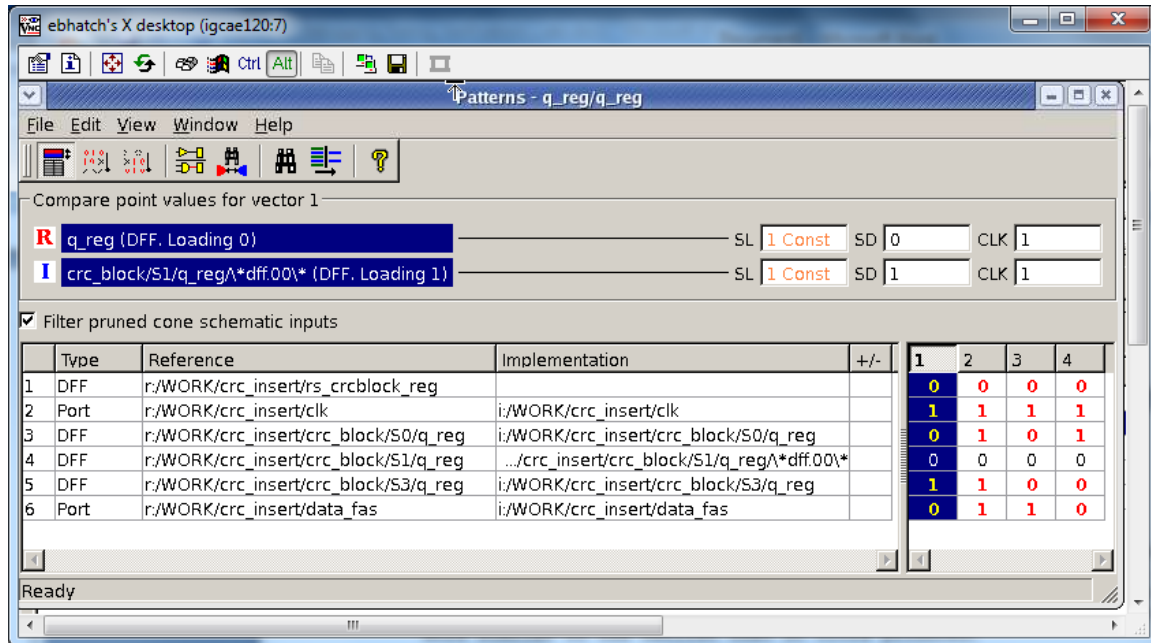
```
-----
Found 1 Rejected Guidance Command
```

```
-----
The rejection of some SVF guidance commands will almost invariably
cause verification failures. For more information use:
'report_svf_operation -status rejected -command command_name'
-----
reg_constant
-----
```

```
*****
*****
```

Notice the suggestion to run the command `report_svf_operation`. We will do that after just a few more steps.

3.) Let's take a quick view of the failing patterns:



The patterns indicate that single unmatched reference register has a value of "0" for every failing pattern. Perhaps it is a constant1 register?

4.) Now, let's look at the reason for Formality rejecting the SVF `reg_constant` guidance.

```
fm_shell (verify)> report_svf_operation -status rejected -command reg_constant

## SVF Operation 11 (Line: 82) - reg_constant. Status: rejected
## Operation Id: 11
guide_reg_constant \
  -design { crc_insert } \
  { rs_crcblk_reg } 1

Info: guide_reg_constant 11 (Line: 82) Cannot find master reference cell
'rs_crcblk_reg'.
```

Formality cannot find the register named "rs_crcblk_reg" in the reference design it created. However, the unmatched register in the reference design is named "rs_crcblock_reg". The names are close, but do not completely match up, so Formality rejected the guidance. The problem could be a naming concordance difference between Design Compiler and Formality when each tool created the design from the RTL.

5.) Modify the svf.txt file located under "formality_svf" directory that was automatically generated during the "set_svf_crc_insert.svf" command. Change the name of the register in the SVF from "rs_crcblk_reg" to "rs_crcblock_reg" which Formality will recognize in its reference container.

6.) After modifying the svf.txt file, rename the directory from "formality_svf" to "modified_svf". Change the Formality TCL script to point to the new directory. Formality will look for SVF files in the specified directory.

7.) After running with the modified SVF file, the Guidance Summary should be clean. You should have a successful verification.

***** Guidance Summary *****						
Status						
Command		Accepted	Rejected	Unsupported	Unprocessed	Total
change_names	:	7	0	0	0	7
environment	:	3	0	0	0	3
instance_map	:	2	0	0	0	2
mark	:	2	0	0	0	2
reg_constant	:	1	0	0	0	1
uniquify	:	2	0	0	0	2

Formality will perform an internal verification check on the potentially constant register before accepting reg_constant guidance.

8.) Instead of modifying the SVF, you could have verified this register against a constant1, and found that it was truly a constant 1. Then, you could use the set_constant command to manually set this register to a constant1 value. This will also give a successful verification result.

FM Lab5: Recognizing Clock-gating

Objective: This is a gate_vs_gate verification. This testcase has clock-gating circuitry in both the reference and implementation designs. You must change the "runme.fms" FM TCL script to get a successful verification.

Note: The legacy variable *verification_clock_gate_hold_mode* turns on functionality that identifies clock-gating circuitry leading to a clk-pin of a rising edge DFF.

Lab flow:

- 1.) Run the verification using the existing "runme.fms" script.
- 2.) Find clues to indicate potential problems.
- 2a) Transcript messages:

The only message is the name of the failing compare point:

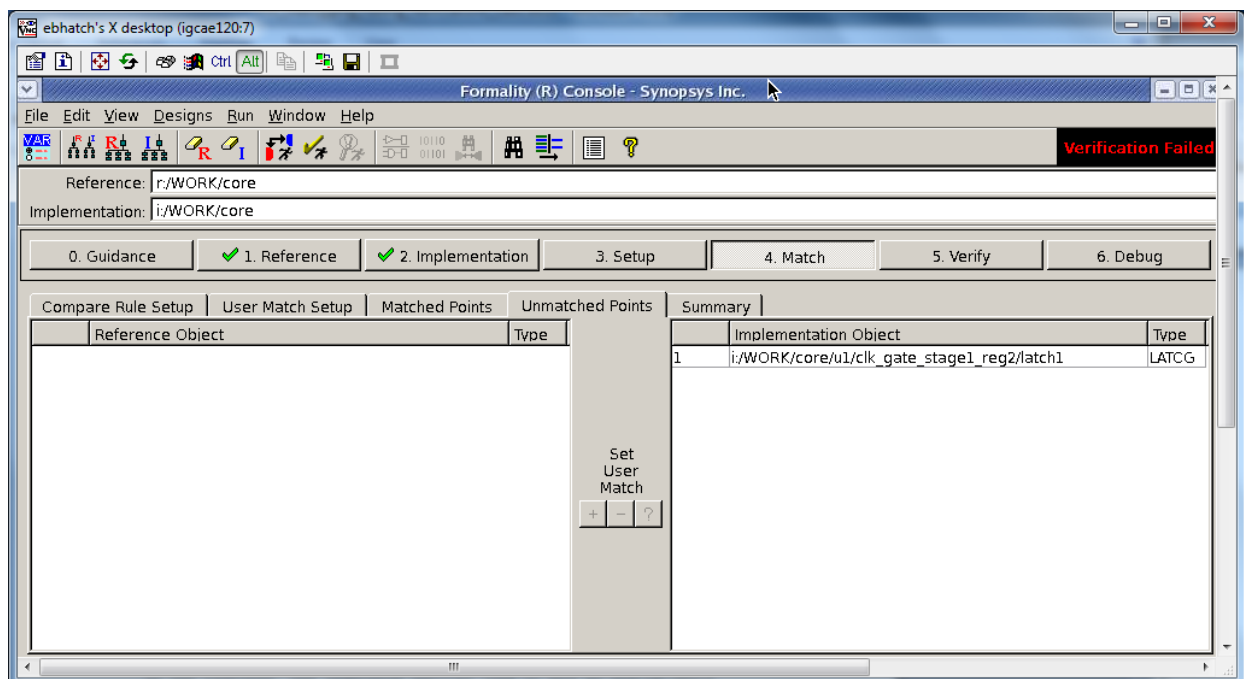
```
Status: Verifying...
Compare point ul/LOCKUP failed (is not equivalent)
```

Lockup latches are usually positioned at the end of the clock-gating chain during clock tree synthesis.

Let's investigate this failure further.

- 2b) Messages from matching:

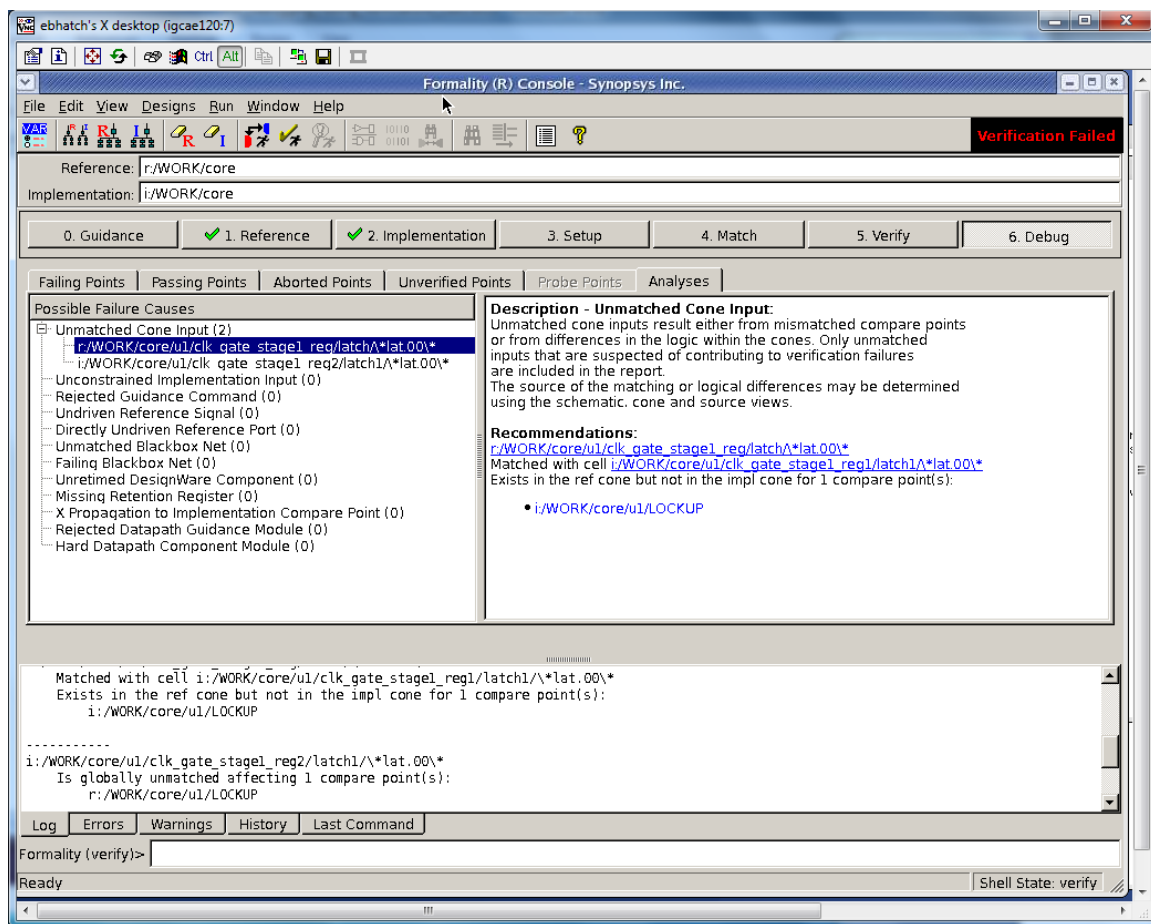
Bring up the GUI and view the Match tab. Here is a picture of the GUI unmatched points tab.



Remember that this is a gate_vs_gate design with clk-gating latches in both the reference and implementation. Here we see an extra clock-gating latch in the implementation only.

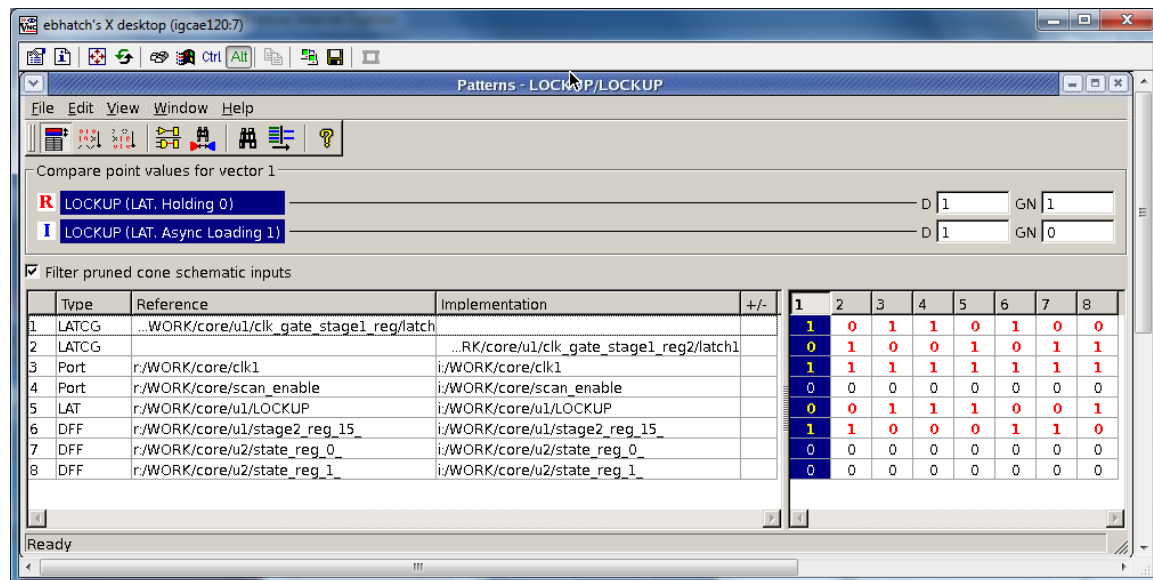
It is common for a clock-gating cell to be split into multiple clock-gating cells to satisfy fanout requirements and skew requirements during clock-tree synthesis.

2c) Run "analyze -failing" on the testcase.



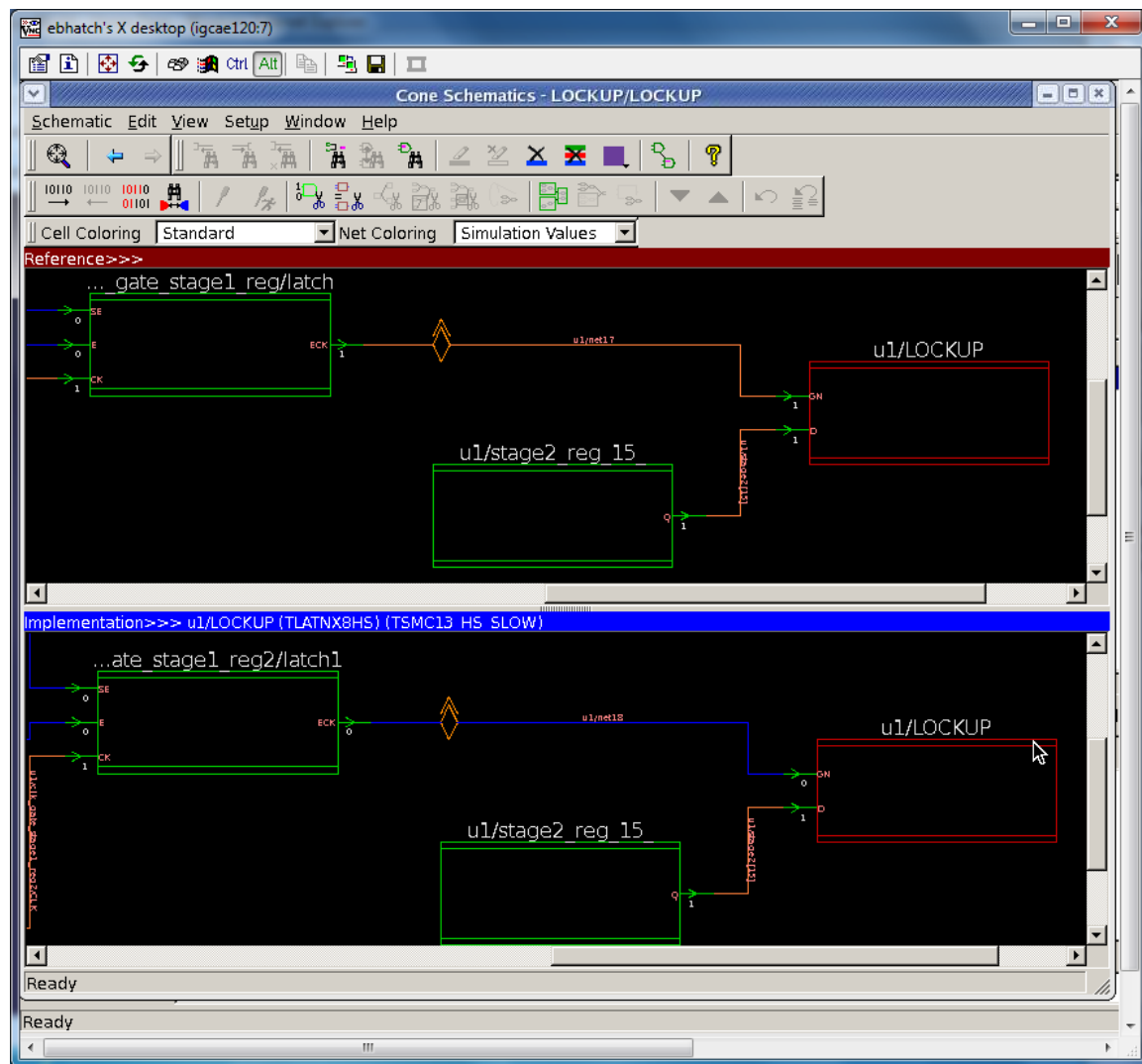
Here we see some hints about what is happening. The failing compare point `r:/WORK/core/u1/LOCKUP` is affected by a globally unmatched latch `i:/WORK/core/u1/clk_gate_stage1_reg2/latch1`.

3.) Viewing the pattern viewer for the failing compare point:



It appears that even though these latches are clk-gating latches, they are not acting like clock-gating latches for this failing compare point. It appears that the failures are happening if FM places opposite values on them. Normally, clock-gating latches do not act as "active" logic cone inputs.

4.) The logic cones confirm that Formality is placing and using different values on these supposed clock-gating latches:



At this point you can see that these clk-gating latches are not driving the clk-pin of a rising edge DFF, but rather are going into the lockup latch instead.

The legacy variable `verification_clock_gate_hold_mode` is not designed to handle this situation.

5.) Our alternative is to try the new clock-gating algorithm invoked by using the variable `verification_clock_gate_edge_analysis`.

6.) Re-run Formality with the new variable to get a successful verification.

FM Lab6: ECO Problem **Using Graphical Debugging**

Objective: This lab will help you identify and repair a design difference. You must correctly change the gate-level netlist to get a successful verification.

Background: This is an ECO RTL_vs_gate verification. There is no SVF file. A design engineer changed both the RTL and the gate-level netlist manually without re-running synthesis. The modified RTL is correct and golden. It passed simulation with great results.

Your friend, a new engineer, is trying to verify the design and is having problems with debugging the failing verification.

Please help him modify the gate-level netlist to correctly implement the ECO.

Lab flow:

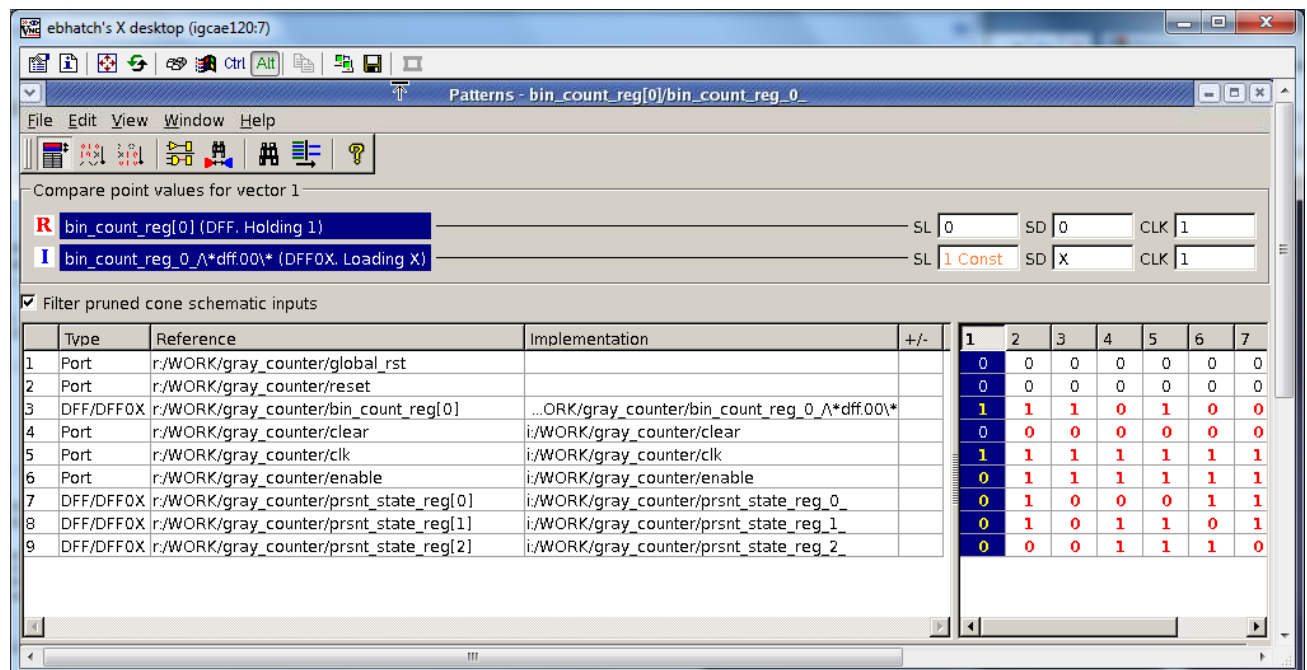
1.) Run the verification using the existing "runme.fms" script.

2.) Find clues to indicate potential problems. The transcript indicates some interesting things in the implementation design:

```
Warning: 0 (1) undriven nets found in reference (implementation) design; see
formality.log for list (FM-399)
Info: 0 (2) multiply-driven nets found in reference (implementation) design;
see formality.log for list.
```

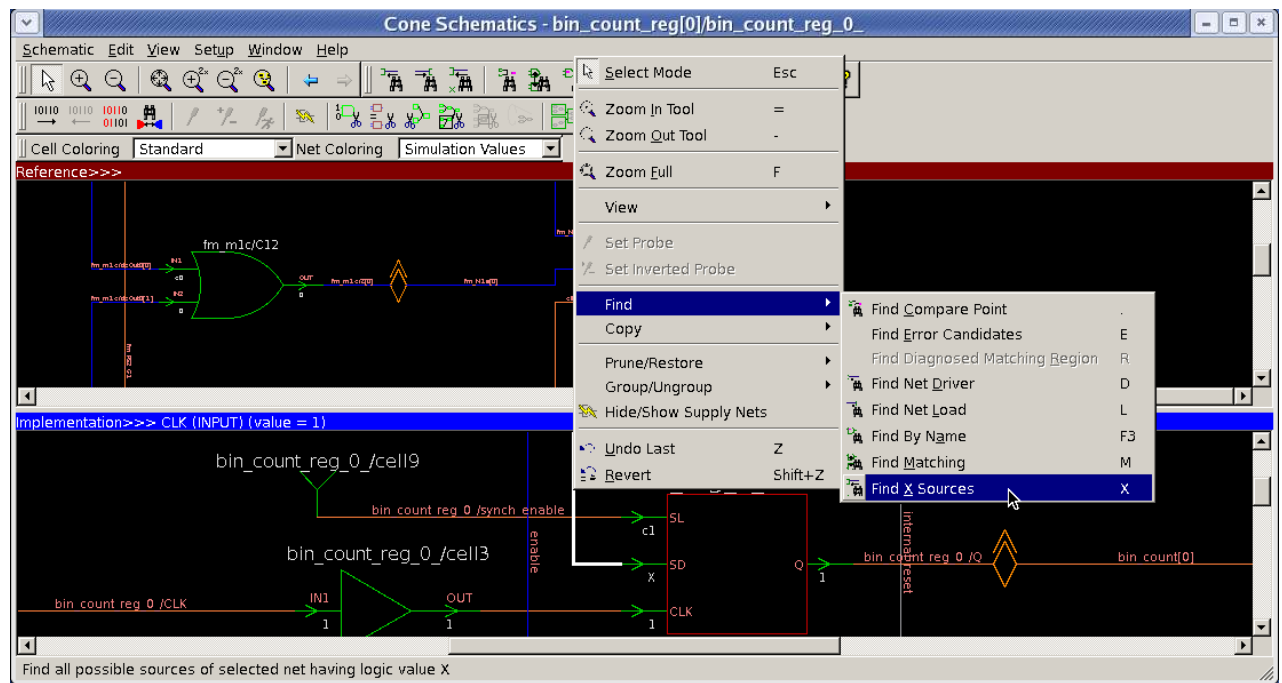
3a) The analyze command has no suggestions.

3b) View the pattern window:

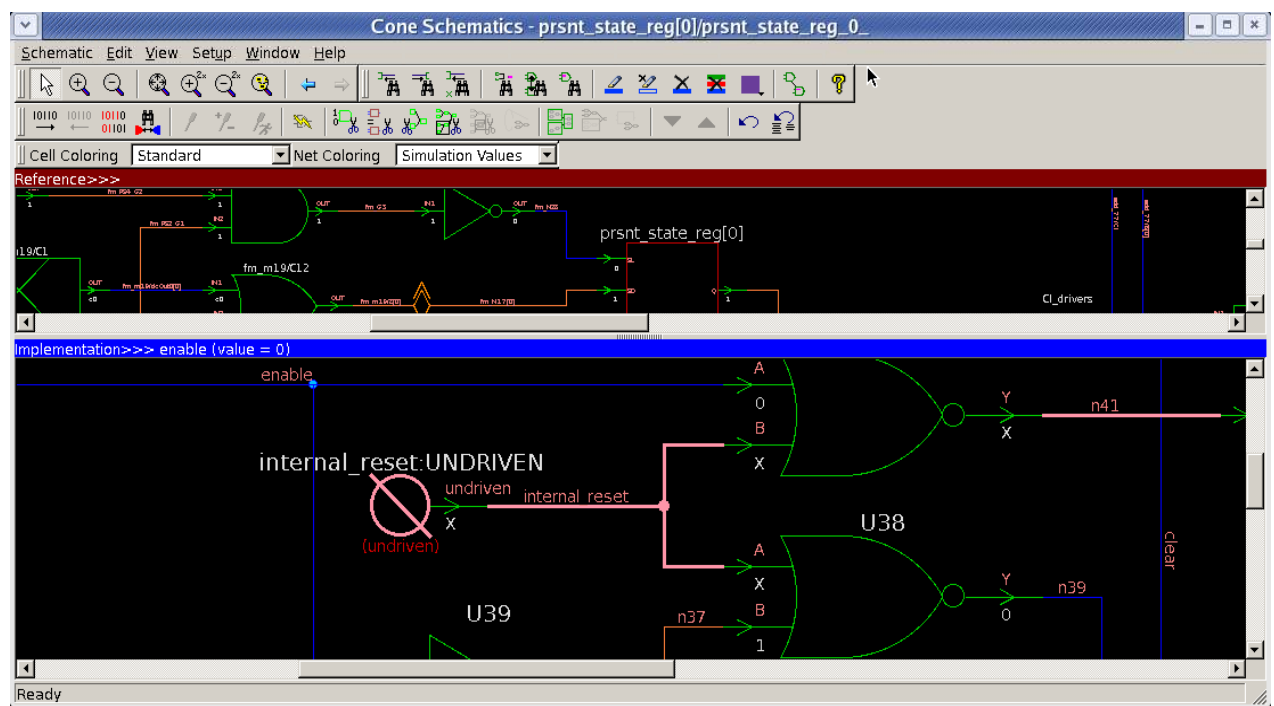


The reference design has two input ports that are named "global_rst" and "reset". These seem to be missing in the logic cone for this compare point. Notice the "X" on the D-input of this implementation register compare point.

4.) View the logic cone to visually inspect the problem.



5.) Using the popup menu, perform a "Prune/Restore -> Expand Schematic". Then, select the net with the "X" value in the implementation leading to the SD pin of the DFF. Use the popup menu to "Find X Sources". This will trace back to the source of the "X", highlighting the problem in the netlist.



Note the undriven net in the implementation design. This is the key to the verification difference. The net name is "internal_reset".

6.) Search for this net in the Verilog netlist. You will need to edit the netlist. Use your favorite editor to view and repair the netlist. (FYI - You can bring up a browser window by selecting the component this net drives, bringing up the menu (right mouse click), and selecting View Source. However, cannot edit using this browser.)

You might also want to view the netlist object for this net using the menu item View Object.

7.) Trace this net in the netlist to the components it connects with. Ponder why it is not working and fix it.

8.) Re-run verification. If you do not get a successful verification, view the .solution directory.

FM Lab7: Solving Multiple Problems

Objective: This lab will help you identify and overcome multiple verification problems. You must change the "runme.fms" FM Tcl script to get a successful verification.

Lab flow:

- 1.) Run the verification using the existing "runme.fms" script.
- 2.) Find clues to indicate potential problems.
- 3.) Transcript messages:

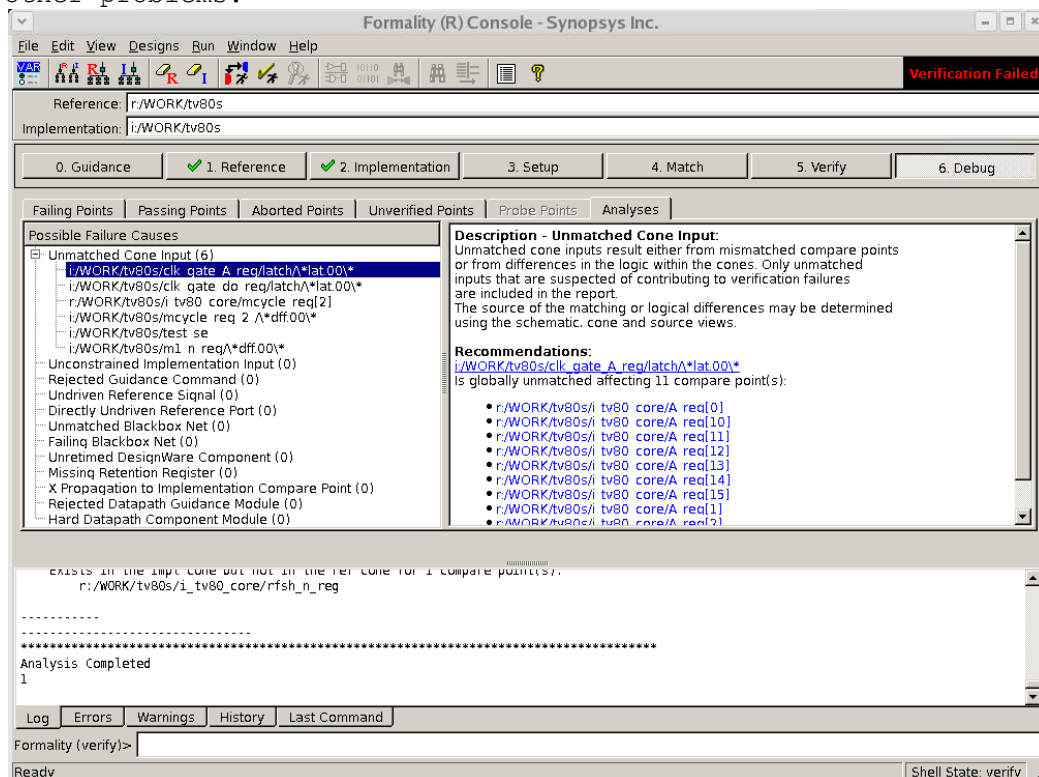
Formality debugging involves collecting information that may point to the reason why the design fails verification. Always look at the transcript messages first.

Note the following messages in the transcript:

```
...
set signature_analysis_match_compare_points false
...
Info: Formality Guide Files (SVF) can improve matching performance and success by
automating setup.
...
```

If you got this script from another engineer in your company, please ask them why they are turning off signature analysis? Ask them why they are not using the SVF file?

- 4.) Run "Analyze". Formality indicates that there are logic cone inputs that exist in the implementation design that do not exist in the reference design. This could be caused by clock-gating or by scan, or other problems.

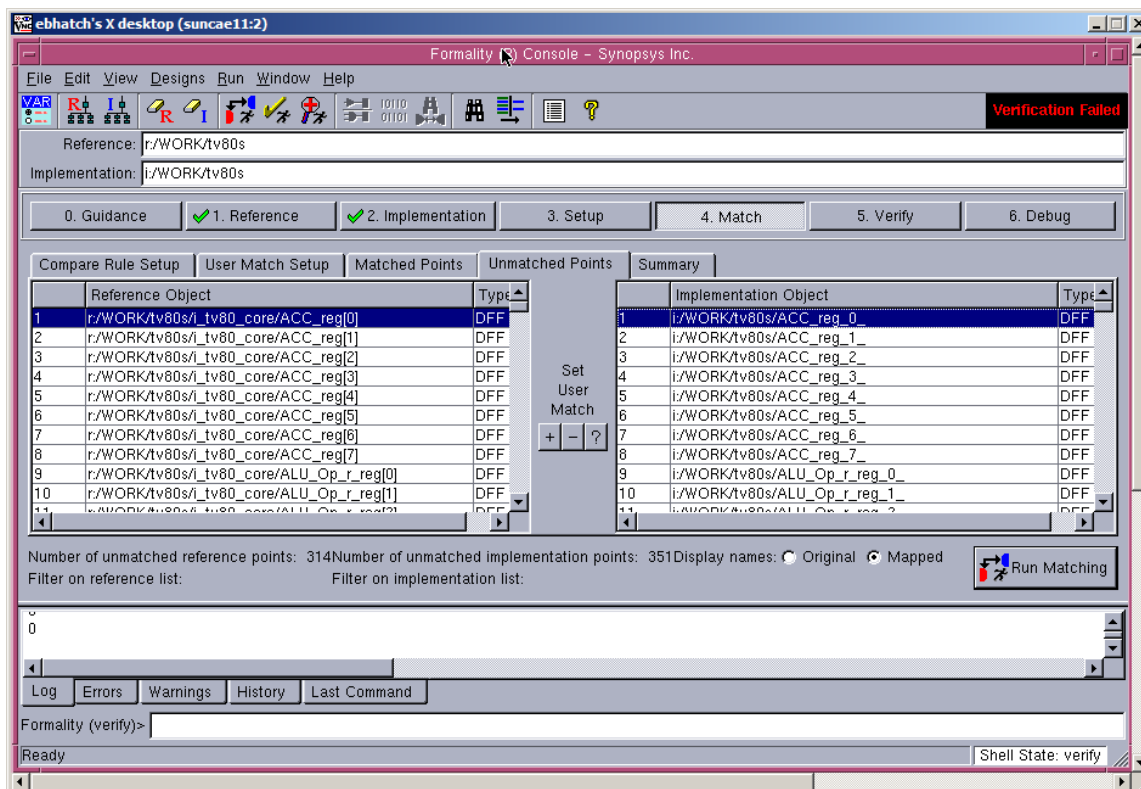


5.) Messages from matching:

```
***** Matching Results *****
77 Compare points matched by name
0 Compare points matched by signature analysis
0 Compare points matched by topology
14 Matched primary inputs, black-box outputs
314(351) Unmatched reference(implementation) compare points
0(2) Unmatched reference(implementation) primary inputs, black-box outputs
177(0) Unmatched reference(implementation) unread points
-----
Unmatched Objects                                REF      IMPL
-----
Input ports (Port)                               0         2
Registers                                         314       351
  DFF                                              314       314
  LAT                                              0         36
  Constant 1                                       0         1
*****
```

There are several unmatched compare points. This can be one of the problems with this verification.

Here is a picture of the GUI unmatched points tab.



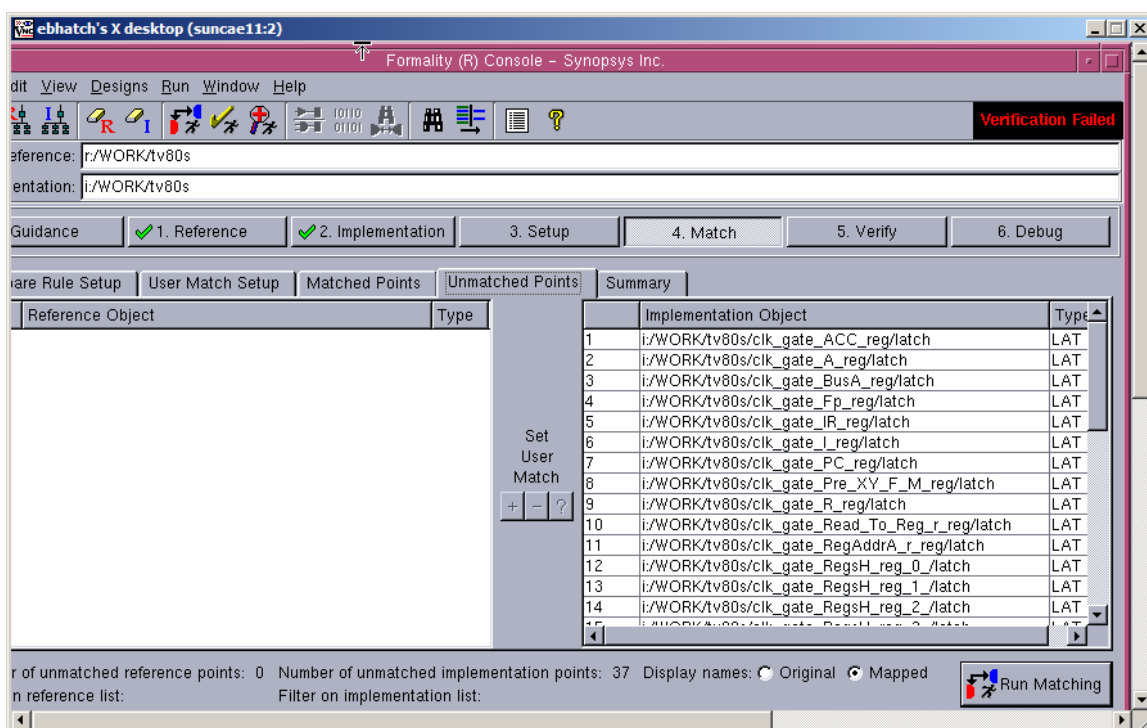
Several compare points look similar but remained unmatched.

6.) At this point we are confident that at least some of the failures are due to matching problems. Try one of the following to correct this issue:

- Use the SVF file.
- Or, write compare rules to fix up matching.

7.) After correcting the script, run through verification again to see what problems remain. Notice that the number of unmatched points has significantly diminished.

8.) View the GUI unmatched points tab again:



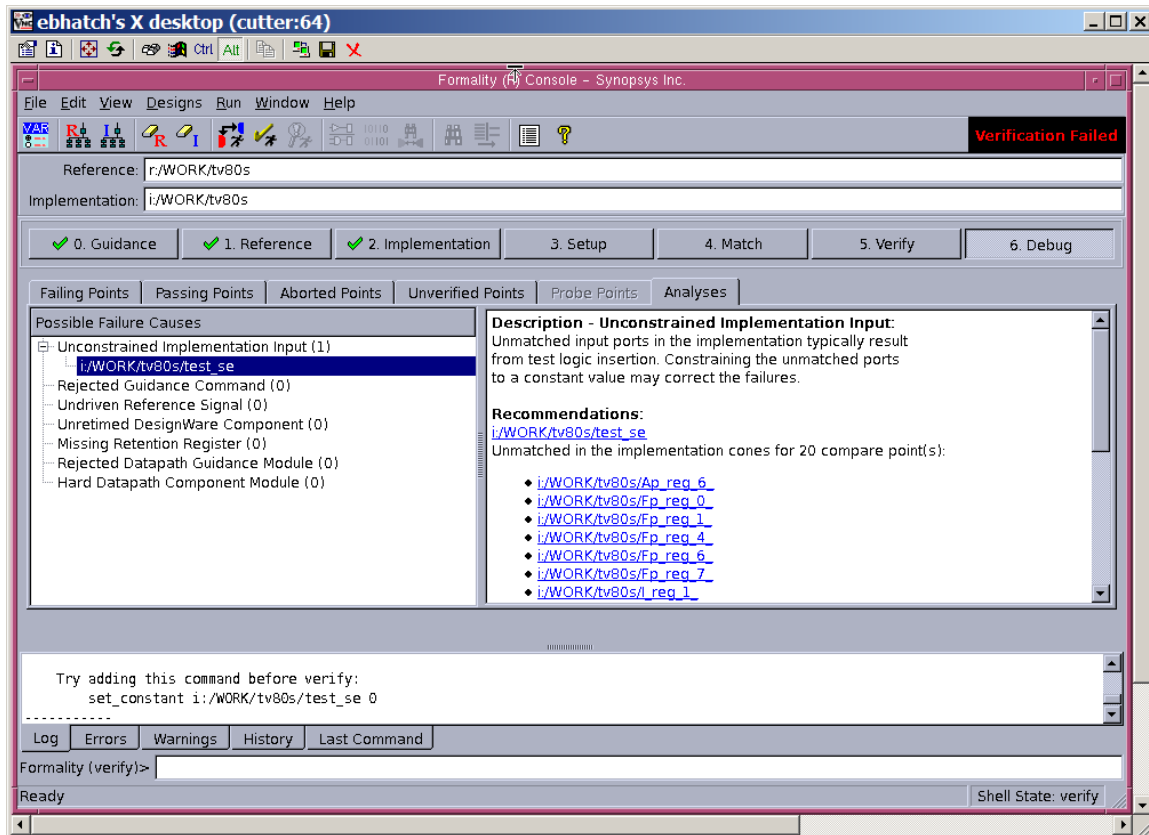
Several of these unmatched objects are ".../clk_gate..."; however, they are defined as latches. These are probably clock-gating latches.

9.) Resolve the clock-gating latch identification issue by setting this variable:

```
set verification_clock_gate_hold_mode low
```

7.) Re-run verification with the corrected FM Tcl script.

8.) Matching now looks good; however, there are still failing compare points. Try using the "Analyze" feature to get clues for debugging.



9.) Formality indicates that test logic is not disabled, but should be for RTL vs Gate verification.

10.) Set a constant to disable scan mode.

```
setup; set_constant i:/WORK/tv80s/test_se 0 ;verify
```

11.) Fix up the FM TCL script and re-run verification. View the example "runme.fms" under the .solution directory.