The photoessay project has started in the 3 classes (English 304 (technical writing), English 318 (business writing) and Biology 103 (environmental science). The first step was to give the three classes, plus three control classes (2 sections of technical writing and a section of environmental science) an environmental attitude survey. This pre-test will be compared to post test results taken at the end of the semester. We hope to show that working on an environmental science project in an English class will help to improve student environmental awareness. Secondly, the three participating classes had the project explained to them and they began their research phase. Currently, the biology class has completed a research project into the causes and effects of mercury pollution in South Carolina, and the technical writing classes have turned this research into an outline, which the business writing classes will next turn into a power point presentation using graphics collected by the students and photographs taken by the instructors over the summer. Once the power point presentation is complete, the three classes will check it for accuracy and cohesion and then it will be burned onto CD-roms to be distributed to SC senators as well as being made available on the web for use by teachers. At the end of the semester we anticipate having a powerpoint presentation ready for distribution as well as photographs for display (along with a description of the problem and reason for the display). We are submitting an abstract to the NAAEE and plan to give results of the project at their October 2003 meeting.

The end result of this project will be threefold: (1) Information on mercury contamination will be disseminated as a teaching resource in the form of a PowerPoint presentation downloadable from the FMU web server and the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina’s web page. The photoessay will also be exhibited for community members at the Florence Museum and will be broadcast on FMU's channel 11. (2) The project can result in a student-sponsored community action initiative, stimulating state discussion regarding fish consumption advisories and methods for preventing mercury increases in our waterways when we send CD-Rom copies of the PowerPoint presentation to South Carolina Senators and Representatives. (3) The PowerPoint presentation can serve as a draft of the text and graphics for DHEC’s proposed poster that will provide mercury warnings to the fishing public in locations where they are more likely to see it.

Please feel free to enroll as a member of the Biology 103 Honors course on the blackboard teaching site at FMU to see what kinds of research / photos the project has come up with so far. To do this, go to http://blackboard.fmarion.edu. Hit the button that says "create account". It will bring you to a page and ask you to fill in some information, including the username you wish to use and a password. Make sure you include your school phone number and address and a valid email. After the account has been created, click on the second tab ("courses") at the top of the page. Click on
"Browse course catalog" on the right of the screen. Scroll down the list until you find **Biology 103 Honors** and click on the "Enroll" button. You will be asked for an **access code**, which is 103. After the initial visit, you can return to your account by going to http://blackboard.fmarion.edu and clicking on "log in". Make sure to remember your name and password! Then just click on **my courses**, biology 103 honors. Note the panel to left - there are links to supplementary materials (course documents: mercury info) including several articles on mercury in freshwater (in Microsoft Word format), students’ answers to research questions about mercury, the powerpoint outline, and the photos of SC fisherpeople. If you check back towards the end of the semester, the powerpoint presentation will be there as well.