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Jerry C Obiekwe* (accessx@uakron.edu), P. O. Box 411, Orrville, OH 44667. *Mathematical Word Problems: An Investigation of the Optimum Period of Teaching Word Problems in a College Algebra Course in Order to Maximize Learning Outcomes.*

Mathematical word problems are perhaps the most challenging aspect of college algebra for most students. Several factors may be responsible for this dilemma. The cognitive complexity of word problems highlights the translation phase as the most difficulty because of the linguistics and the general knowledge requirement. In most college algebra text books, the topics are arranged in such a way that the word problems are dealt with in the first few weeks of the semester. The question is: does the textbook arrangement presents the best scenario for maximizing the learning of word problems if linguistics is assumed to be a bottleneck for students. This study examined the best time to teach word problems in order to produce the best results by comparing data between teaching word problems in the first few weeks of the semester, as arranged in the textbook, and the last week of the semester. The results and the implications to teaching and learning word problems will be discussed. (Received August 01, 2012)