

1106-M1-2284      **Tharanga M.K. Wijetunge\*** (tharanga.wijetunge@lyon.edu), **Kirthi Premadasa** and **Kavita Bhatia**. *The dreaded word problem: What do students remember?*

Math instructors usually provide a collection of word problems to accompany many topics taught in undergraduate mathematics, the motivation for which is to provide students with a glimpse of the real life applications these concepts may have. However it is a good question to ponder which (if any) of these examples will remain in the memory of the students at the end of the class, even in an outline or context form. We ask the question: Is there an underlying pattern to math application contexts that students remember (if any) at the end of a course delivery? Around 100 students in three liberal arts colleges located in Wisconsin and Arkansas took part in this study which was inspired by an earlier study which showed that in college algebra, given a choice, students highly significantly preferred word problems belonging to certain categories over others. Findings of our study will be presented during the talk. A longer retention of a mathematical application in memory can positively inspire a student towards mathematics. The emerging patterns will help educators in both high school and college to create an optimized collection of classroom and homework problems to present to when teaching certain topics. (Received September 16, 2014)