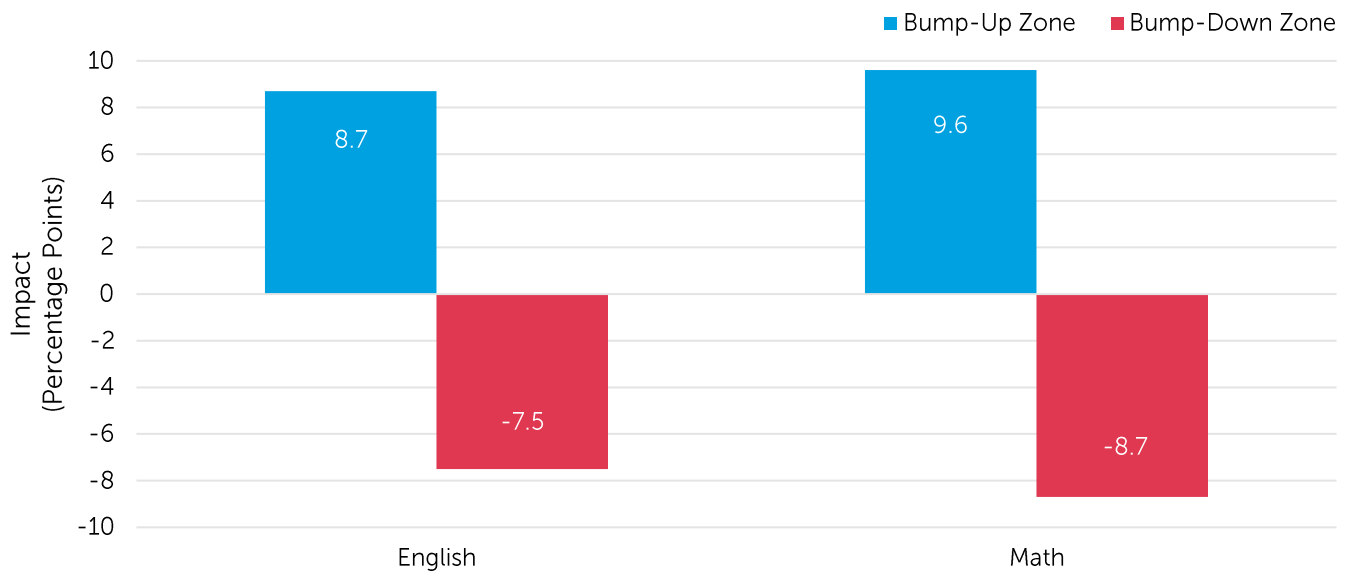


Improving Gateway Course Completion

Placing students directly into gateway courses improves their rates of gateway course completion, regardless of the placement method.



Source: Barnett, E., Kopko, E., Cullinan, D., & Belfield, C. (2020). [Who Should Take College-Level Courses? Impact Findings from an Evaluation of a Multiple Measures Assessment Strategy](#). Notes: Simplified bar chart from linked study findings.

Seven community colleges in the State University of New York (SUNY) system participated in a random assignment study to determine whether a multiple measures placement system led to better student outcomes than a system based on test scores alone. Outcomes were tracked for three semesters to allow students in developmental prerequisites time to complete the gateway course. Most students' placements were not changed by using multiple measures assessment instead of placement tests at the SUNY colleges, but among those who were affected, new impact patterns emerged.

Being "bumped up" to a college-level course by the multiple measures algorithm had a substantial positive effect on students' academic progress in English and math (8.7% and 9.6%); whereas being "bumped down" to a developmental prerequisite course by the multiple measures algorithm had a substantial negative effect on students' academic progress (-7.5 and -8.7%). What benefitted students most was not which placement approach was used but rather that a student was placed into a college-level course. These impacts were of similar magnitude for English and math placement. This Points of Interest shows that placing students directly into gateway courses improves their rates of gateway course completion, regardless of the placement method.

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