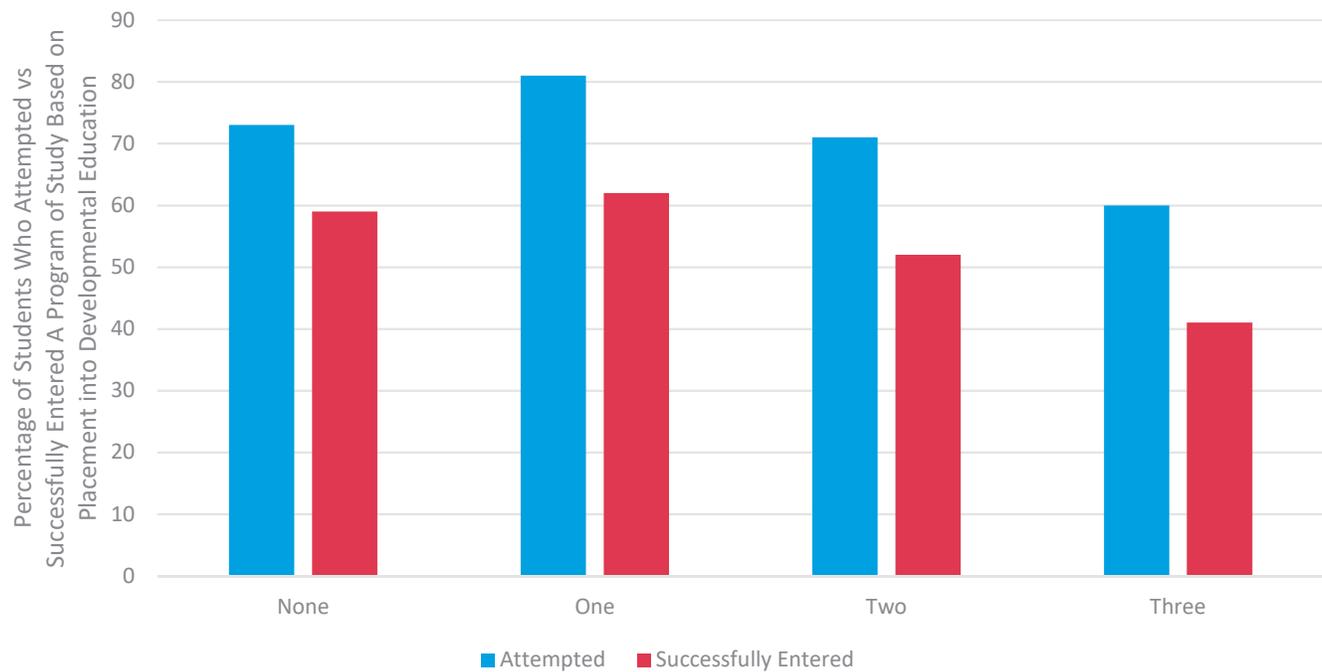


Gaining Momentum in a Program of Study

Differences in outcomes based on placement into developmental courses



Source: Jenkins, D. & Cho, S. [Get with the program: Accelerating community college students' entry into and completion of programs of study.](#) Working Paper 32 (New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, 2012)

Note: Graph adapted from Figure 7 in the article.

Long sequences of developmental courses impede student progress toward completing college-level coursework and limit their chances of entering a program of study and earning a degree. Therefore, understanding how the timing of developmental education affects a learner's educational trajectory remains a key consideration for college leaders. Research consistently shows that students' early momentum in college, specifically enrolling and successfully completing gateway courses in the first year, influences their likelihood of selecting and completing a program of study. The graph above shows the percentage of first-time college students in a 2005-2006 community college cohort who attempted versus successfully entered a program of study over a five-year period by initial placement into developmental education. The graph shows that the percentages of students who attempted or successfully entered a program of study declined when learners were placed into developmental education two or three semesters away from a college-level course. Whereas, peers placed into single-semester or college-level courses were equally as likely to attempt and complete critical gateways courses. This Points of Interest shows that accelerating underprepared students into college-level coursework lowers attrition rates and propels learners to enter a program of study.

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March 15, 2019