Short Term Outcomes of ThinkAchieve Experiential Learning[1]

Report created by OPEIR

December 21, 2022

[1] This analysis was produced by OPEIR in response to a request by Vice Provost Howard-Baptiste. Results are not necessarily generalizable and attempts to use results outside the scope of this project should be avoided.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CHATTANOOGA

Introduction and Population Description

This analysis reviewed one-year metrics of degree-seeking undergraduates (i.e., admitted to UTC as a first-time freshman, transfer, or readmit) who participated in any ThinkAchieve, UTC's quality enhancement program through experiential learning, activity in academic years 2018-19 through 2020-21. The outcomes were compared to undergraduates who did not participate within the same timeframe. Group sizes and demographic ratios are listed in the first table to the right.

The most frequent form of ThinkAchieve participation is through courses. Approximately one in four students participating in ThinkAchieve complete at least one eligible course annually. Events and Experiences are the second and third most frequent, respectively. Students who opt to participate in ThinkAchieve events complete in at least one most frequently but completed at least three to four on average. Only eight students completed a community engagement activity within the three years examined.

Undergraduate Populations and Demographics by ThinkAchieve Participation

Group	Academic Year	N	%Female	%Students of Color[2]
ThinkAchieve Participants	2018-19	3,018	61.4%	20.6%
	2019-20	2,756	60.6%	21.5%
	2020-21	2,575	59.4%	20.9%
Did not Participate	2018-19	7,055	54.0%	21.6%
	2019-20	7,350	54.9%	21.0%
	2020-21	7,615	56.9%	21.5%

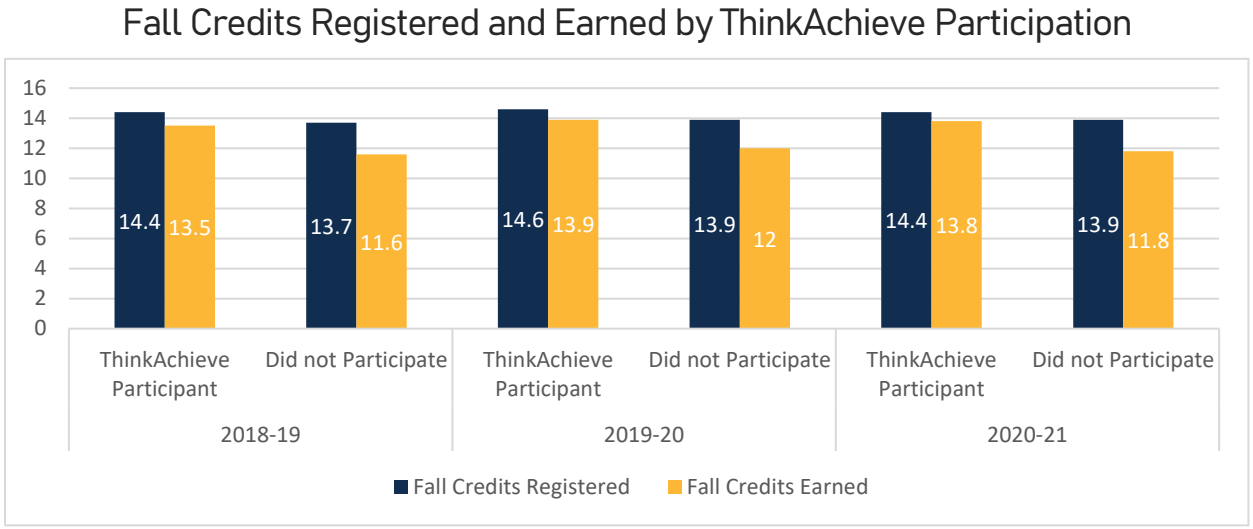
ThinkAchieve Activity Participation by Activity Type

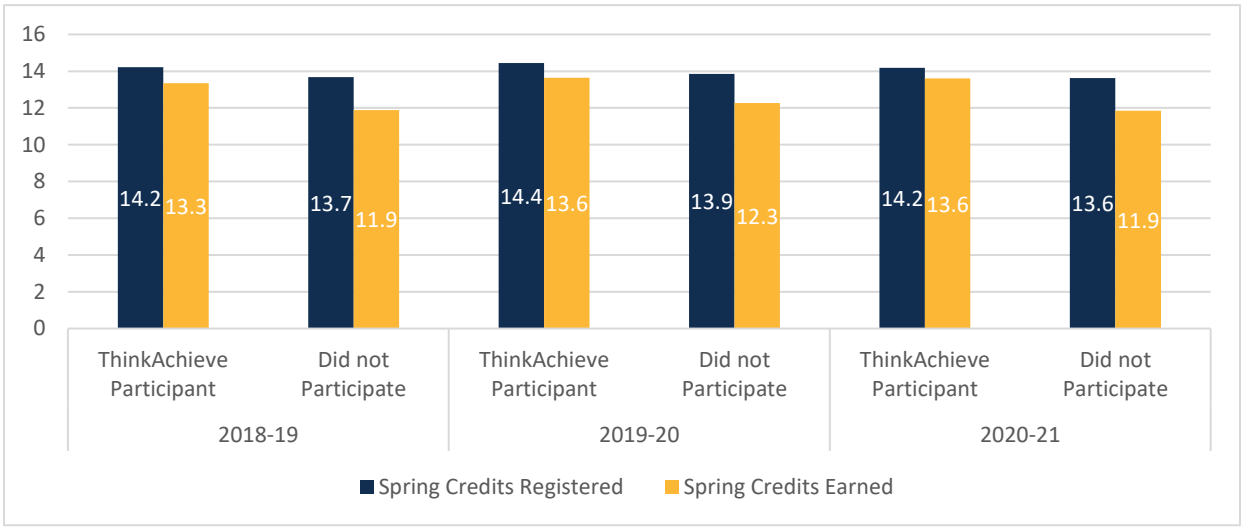
Completed a…	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Community Engagement	<1%	<1%	<1%
Course	86.0%	79.9%	64.5%
Event	8.0%	11.2%	2.4%
Experience	13.7%	15.1%	13.3%

[2] Hispanic, African American, Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or multiracial

Results

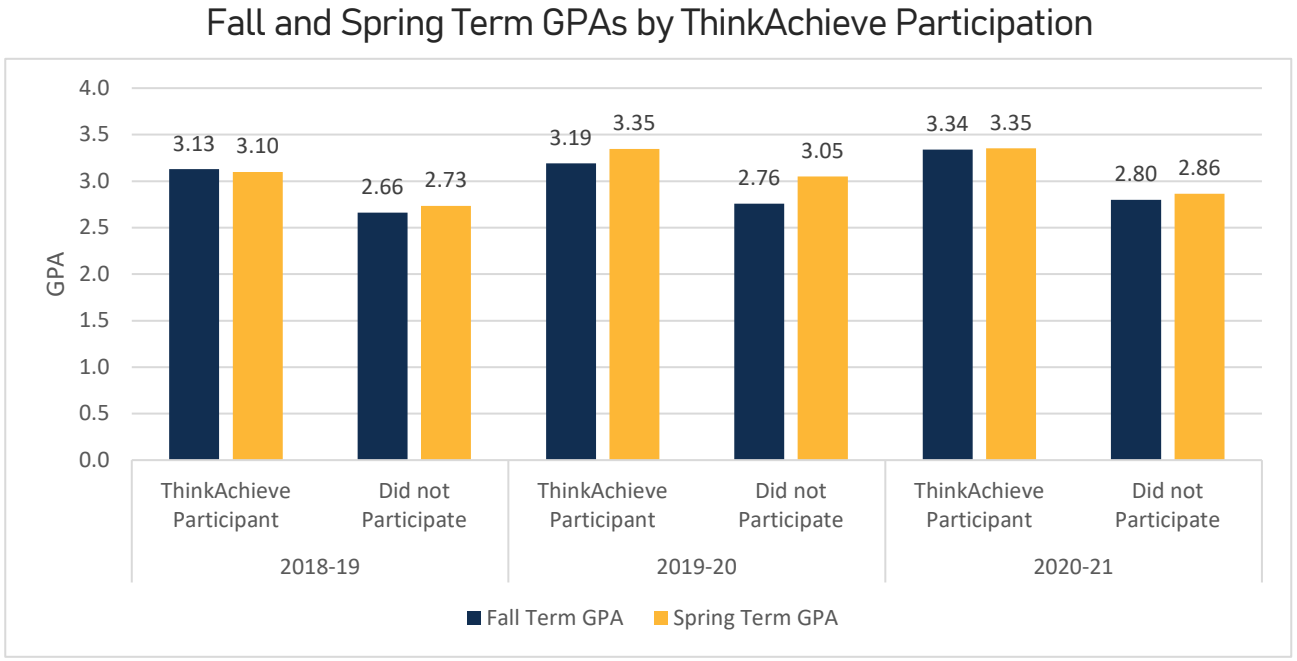
ThinkAchieve undergraduates show improved term-by-term performance when compared to undergraduates who did not participate in ThinkAchieve activities. ThinkAchieve participants registered at least one credit hour more and completed two more hours than other undergraduates per term. The larger number of credits earned resulted in a 10 percent higher credits registered-to-earned ratio between groups.



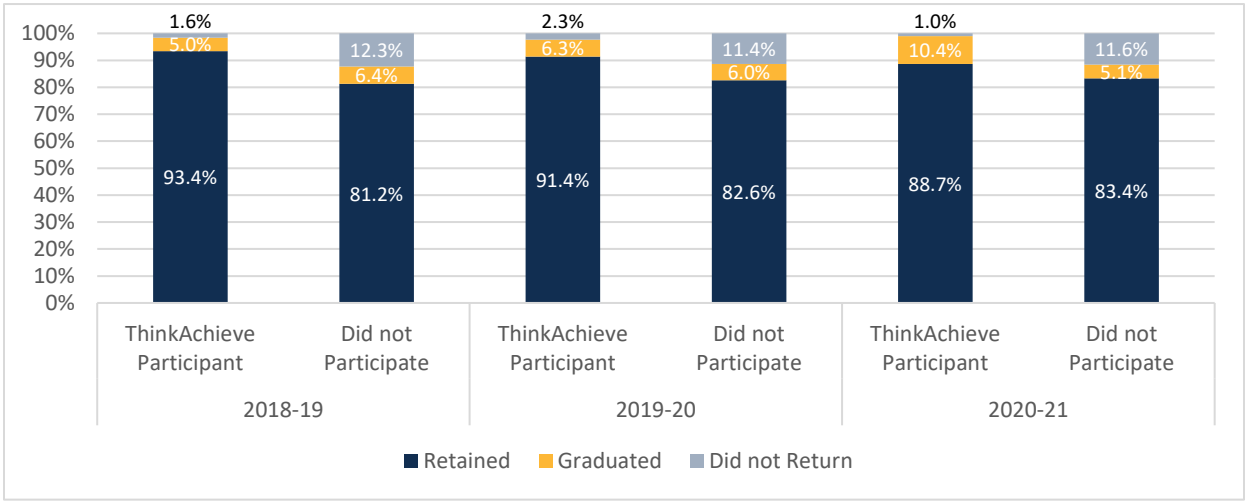
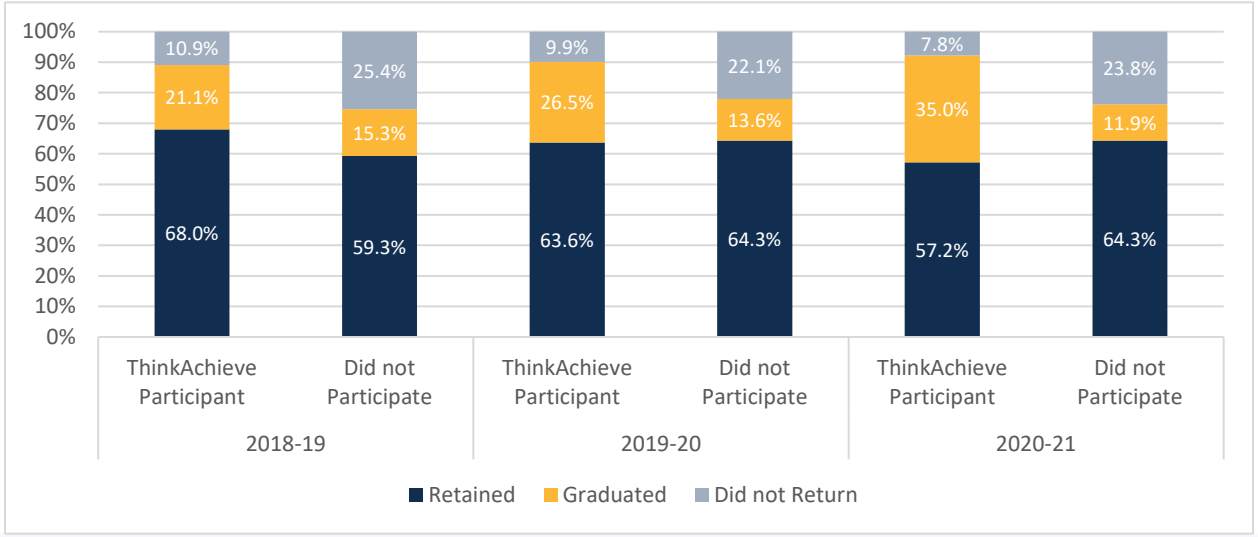


Results Continued

The same increase in term-by-term performance was also found in GPA. ThinkAchieve undergraduates ended both fall and spring with a term GPA over a 3.10. In contrast, nonparticipating undergraduates earned a 2.74 fall GPA and a 2.88 for the spring.



Results Continued

ThinkAchieve participants hold the same improved performance in the proportion retained or graduated in one year. On average, 98 percent of ThinkAchieve undergraduates were retained to spring or graduated by the end of fall, a 16 percent difference when compared to nonparticipating undergraduates. Retention to the fall term show similar rates between both groups. However, a significantly larger proportion graduated in comparison, leaving less than 10 percent of ThinkAchieve undergraduates who did not return or graduate by the next fall term compared to 24 percent of nonparticipants.

For the past three years, undergraduates engaging in ThinkAchieve show an improved performance compared to their peers up to one year. However, it seems that not many students see the program through to completion. Since Fall 2018, an average of 16 students per academic year have graduated with the ThinkAchieve award marked on their degree. Together with examining long-term effects such as graduation rates, subsequent analysis should also consider how many points students typically earn towards ThinkAchieve throughout their academic career and potential limitations deterring students from completing ThinkAchieve.