




Sustainability Internship Programs: Strategies for Creating Student Ambassadors for Sustainability

Hongor Batbold, Office for Sustainability

The image shows the exterior of a modern building with large glass windows and a concrete facade. A sign above the entrance reads "WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY". The building is surrounded by trees and a clear sky. A semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

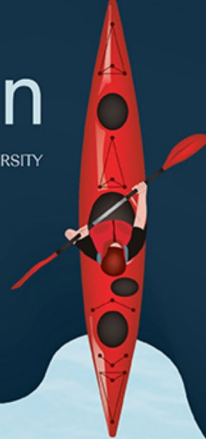
The Office for Sustainability is not only responsible for advancing the campus community's sustainability commitments through various collaborations and initiatives, it is also a discovery-driven learning space to guide students in improving quality of life for all.

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

esustain
Office for Sustainability
OFFICE HOURS
8:00AM - 5:00PM

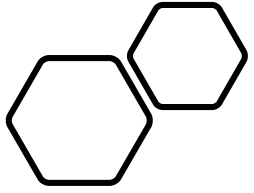


Wesustain Internship Program



**BE A
SUSTAINABILITY
LEADER**

- Semester long
- Cohort based (8-10)
- Paid 500\$
- 6-8hrs per week
- 2-3 hrs hands-on activity
- Group project



- All majors
- Undergrad & postgrad
- International & domestic
- Different experience level



A background image of a classroom where students are sitting on the floor. A female student in the foreground is looking towards the right. In the background, other students are visible, some looking at the camera. On the floor, there are educational materials including a large sheet of paper with a diagram, a small electronic circuit board, and a white plastic component.

**Core
Competencies:
Learning
for
Sustainability**

**Pre-existing
Sustainability
Internships**

**Learning
Objectives**

What are our learning outcomes?

Students will be able to **describe and discuss the state of the planet** and be able to **articulate the consequences of their everyday actions on multiple scales** (on themselves, their communities, and on those distant from them in space and time, including nonhumans).

Students **will develop a deep understanding of the coevolution and interconnectedness of all species** and use this knowledge to **explore** human development **opportunities** and priorities **that promote improvements in quality of life for all** (especially the flourishing of nonhumans and endangered cultures).

Students will **explore leadership strategies, model sustainable behaviors, and experiment with changing their** (and potentially others') **patterns of thinking and behaviors.**

Students will **develop an understanding of the organizational goals** and corresponding short- and long-term objectives **that propel sustainability efforts at Western Michigan University on local, national, and global scales.**

Students will be able to **effectively articulate**, through written and oral communication, **their knowledge of and appreciation for complex, interconnected, and sometimes conflicting sustainability challenges across multiple perspectives.**

WEEKLY THEMES

Leadership Development

DIY

Zero Waste

Behavior Analysis

Sustainable Food Systems

Career Development

Readings

**Journal
Question**

**Discussion
Meeting**

**Enrichment
Activity**

Alternative Energy/Design

Systems Thinking

Alternative Transportation

Permaculture

Social Justice

A top-down photograph of a wooden workbench. On the left, a large, dark metal hand plane with a wooden handle lies diagonally. To its right, a carving knife with a curved blade and a wooden handle is positioned vertically. The workbench is covered with numerous light-colored, curled wood shavings. The text "Consumer Culture Week" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

Consumer Culture Week

Journal Prompt :

The readings illustrate how small, seemingly innocuous actions can have more profound, long-term consequences. Our continued preoccupation with buying the best, newest material items even when those items aren't needed, perpetuate unsustainable behavior. What might help change these prevalent patterns of behavior and the prevailing consumer culture underlying such behavior?

The Responsible Economy by Yvon Chouinard

The Case for Working With Your Hands by
Matthew B. Crawford





A close-up photograph of several mushrooms growing on a forest floor. The mushrooms have light brown, gilled caps and thick, pale stems. They are surrounded by dry leaves, twigs, and a small green leaf in the background. The text "Sustainable Food Systems Week" is overlaid in white, centered on the image.

Sustainable Food Systems Week

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle -
Chapter 1: Called Home by
Barbara Kingsolver

Defense Insiders: Sustainable
communities are the key to
the future by Scott Carlson

Journal Prompt :

Striving to connect back to nature is rarely a priority for citizens of the United States, as Kingsolver pointed out, and people most often prioritize their lives around jobs, family, good weather, and good schools instead. How has this prevalent culture been shaped and what can be done to shift priority to areas that promote sustainability of the environment? Kingsolver suggests that lack of knowledge is one of the biggest problems and challenges. Do you agree?







ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

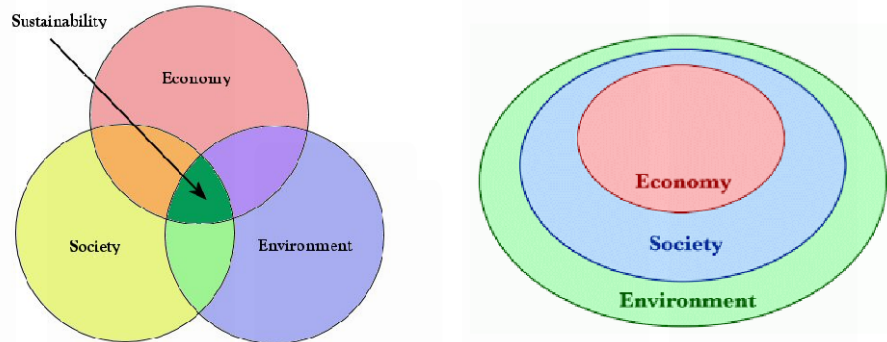
- Career Development Activity
- 2 Community Sustainability Events
- Collaborative Group Project
- Pre & Post Assessments

Wesustain Internship Assessment

Directions: Please answer the following questions in 2-4 succinct, full sentences that reflect your current knowledge on the following topics

1) What is your definition of sustainability?

2) Which diagram below do you believe presents a more accurate depiction of sustainability, and why?

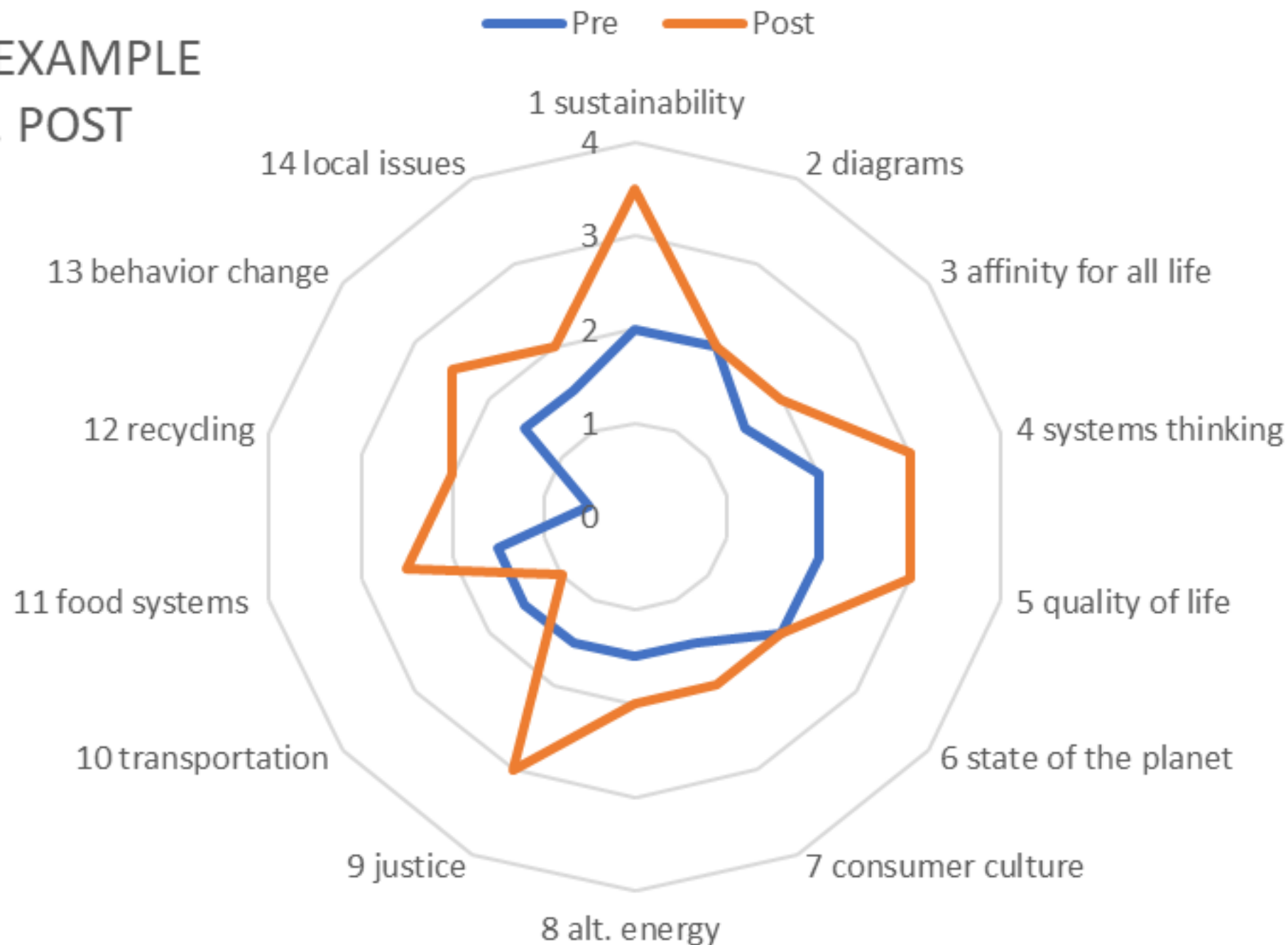


3) a. Provide a few sentences that highlight your knowledge of/perspectives on the following topic: “Affinity for all life”

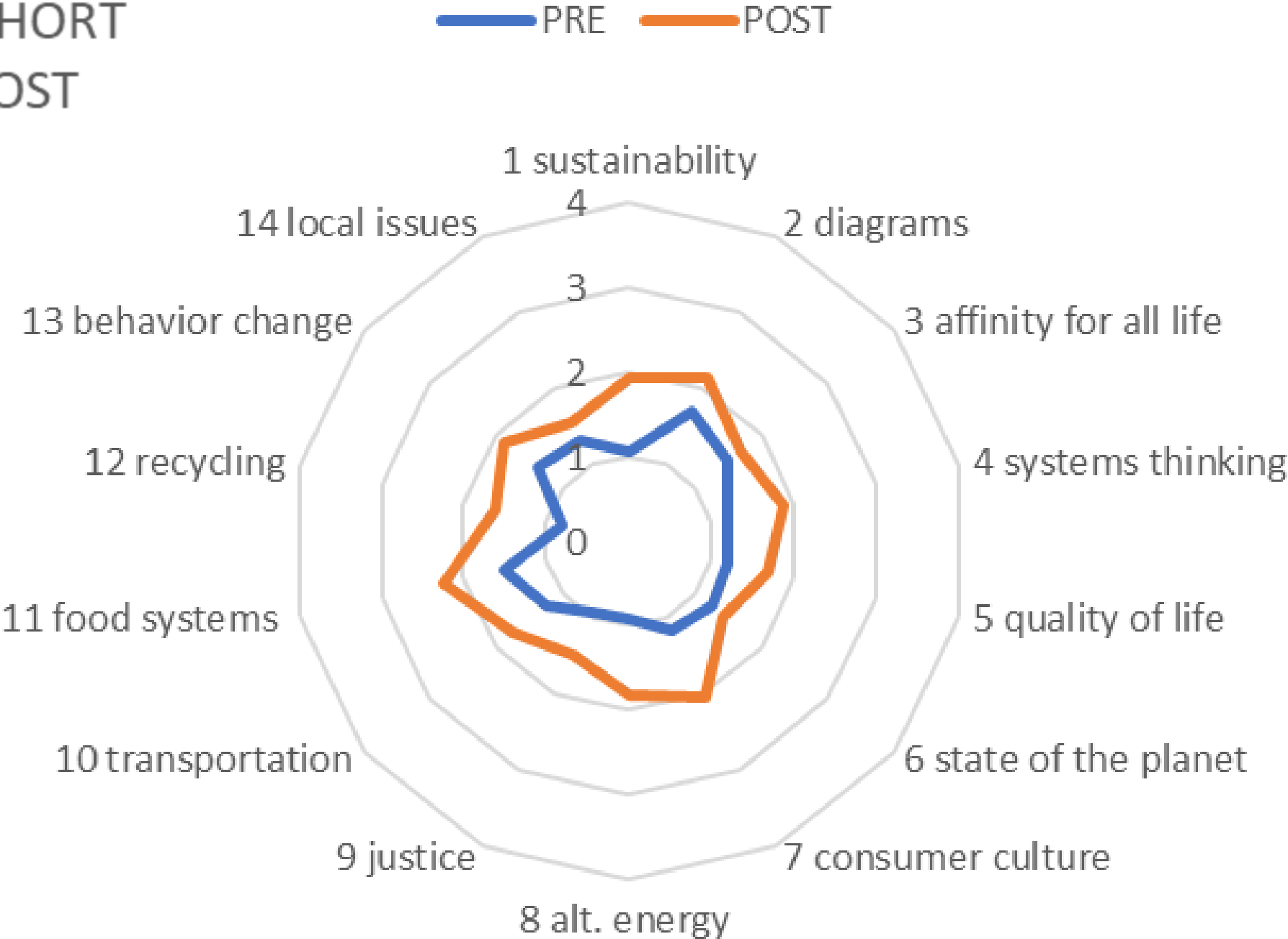
Pre/Post Assessment

- Brief, succinct & full sentence
- More writing space
- Eliminated Likert scales of importance
- Began recording individual questions scores:
 - Topics & competencies we engage & teach well
 - Areas for improvement

STUDENT EXAMPLE PRE VS. POST

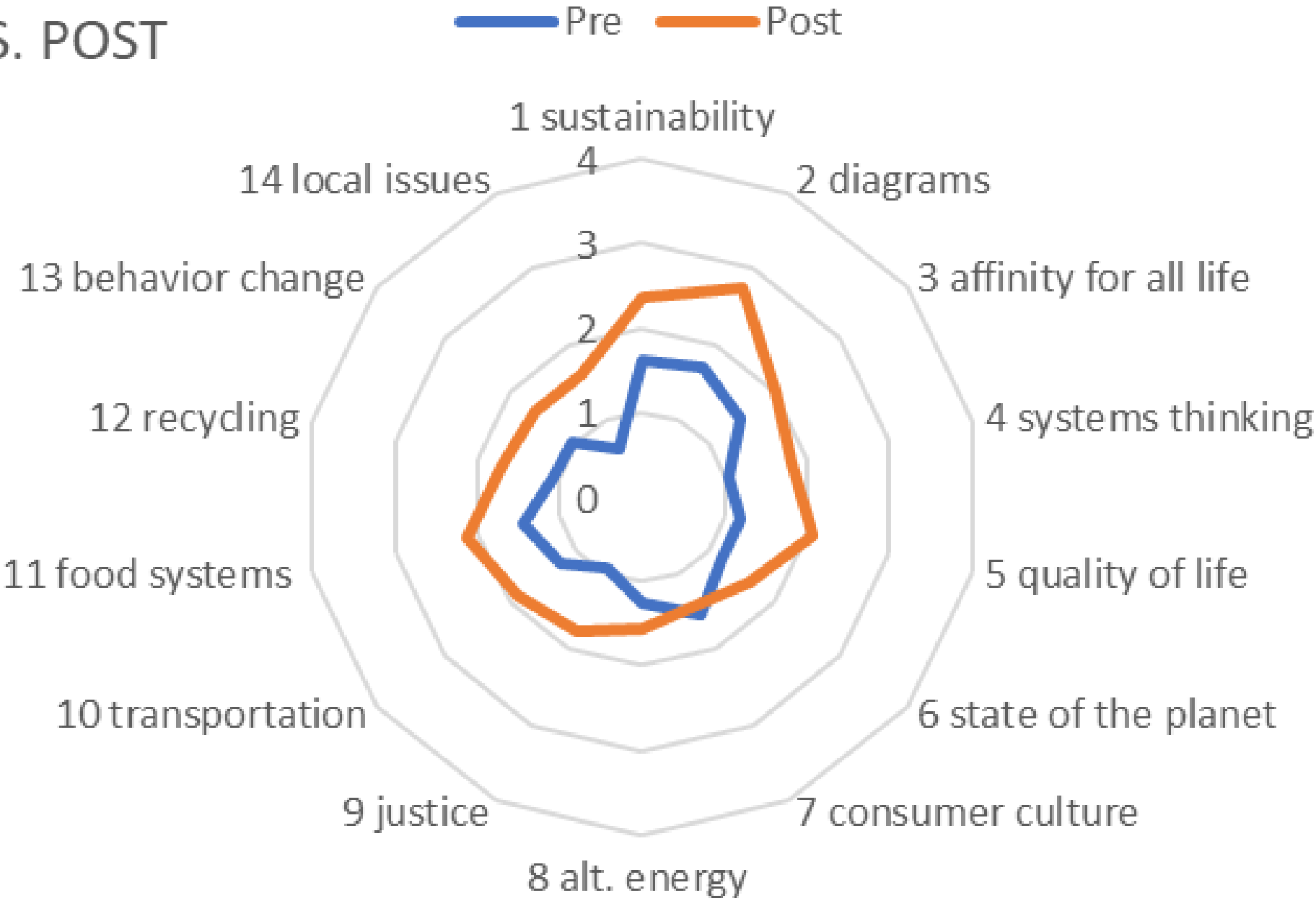


FALL '16 COHORT
PRE VS. POST



SPRING '17 COHORT

PRE VS. POST



Qualitative assessment/reflection

1. Describing

2. Examining

- Sustainability knowledge
- Leadership skills
- Values
- Motivation

3. Articulate learning



I am equipped with permaculture principles that I think will help me to systematically engage people in a change of perspective ~ Emely



This internship has given me the skills and knowledge and confidence to act – to speak on behalf of humans and non-humans who are not granted a voice or who are being unjustly silenced ~ Kaitlin



The most important thing I took away from this internship was the positive communication and adaptability to shifting scenarios ~ McKenzie

WESUSTAIN INTERNSHIP

Hongor Batbold WMU - khongorzul.batbold@wmich.edu

