

Institutionen för kost- och idrottsvetenskap

# Education for Sustainable Food Consumption in Home and Consumer Studies

av

Emmalee Gisslevik

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

som med tillstånd av utbildningsvetenskapliga fakulteten vid  
Göteborgs universitet för vinnande av doktorsexamen i  
kostvetenskap framläggs till offentlig granskning

Fredagen den 2 mars 2018, kl. 13.00. Göteborgs universitet,  
Pedagogen, Hus C, Margareta Huitfeldts auditorium

---

Fakultetsopponent: Professor Inger M Jonsson, Örebro universitet



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG  
ACTA UNIVERSITATIS GOTHOBURGENSIS

## Abstract

Title: Education for Sustainable Food Consumption in Home and Consumer Studies  
Author: Emmalee Gisslevik  
Language: English with a Swedish summary  
ISBN: 978-91-7346-951-7 (print),  
ISBN: 978-91-7346-952-4 (pdf)  
ISSN: 0436-1121  
Keywords: Food, Home economics, Sustainable consumption, Education, Sustainable development, Compulsory school, Curriculum

Education as a means to enable sustainable food consumption has gained increasing recognition as a vital means to decrease current burdens upon both natural resources and human health. In response, the Swedish compulsory school subject of home and consumer studies, which positions education about food as core content, has been revised to incorporate in its national syllabus a perspective of sustainable development since 2011. However, because sustainable development remains an ambiguous, contested concept with a range of definitions and interpretations, it is necessary to gain better understanding of what incorporating its perspective can entail in home and consumer studies, particularly regarding the core food-related content knowledge that it teaches. Building upon four papers, this thesis reports research guided by an interpretive and exploratory approach that involved analysing data from syllabuses, observations, recordings of in-class lessons and interviews with practising teachers. The results reveal two ways of understanding what incorporating a perspective of sustainable development can entail in home and consumer studies in Sweden. The first understanding proposes an enriched and unified practice in which the curriculum prioritises embodied forms of knowledge about healthy, ethical and resource-efficient food consumption by allowing a multi-relational, systems thinking approach while focusing a homemade meal practice. By contrast, the second understanding proposes a practice riddled with inconsistencies and contradictions in providing teaching and learning opportunities to attain the intended goals. This ultimately results in fragmented learning opportunities focused more on informed reasoning than on informed actions. Taken together, both understandings pose theoretical, conceptual and practical implications, both for home and consumer studies in particular and in education for sustainable food consumption in general.