



STUDY ABROAD
CONFERENCE

Permission to Fail? Granted!

Facilitating An Openness to Risk and
Uncertainty As International Educators

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A stylized graphic of the Eiffel Tower in white, with horizontal bars in orange, yellow, and blue. The tower is set against an aerial view of Paris.

PARIS 20
23

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Guiding Questions for Today's Salon

Why is failure important?

What does it mean to fail well?

How can we expand our own comfort with uncertainty and risk?

How can we support our students in expanding their own openness to risk and uncertainty?

How do we support their resilience?

Let's start off-

Due to a flight delay you are unexpectedly stuck in an airport for at least 8 hours.

Consider:

How do you approach spending your time? Are there certain people you would prefer to have with you in this experience? What items would you want to have with you?

Discuss with a neighbor at your table!

Questions for discussion

- 1. What would your first reactions to this scenario be?
How do you imagine you would feel?**
- 2. Who (if anyone) would you want to talk to or reach out to as you determine your next steps and how to spend this time?**
- 3. How would you move through this scenario to determine your next steps?**
- 4. What do you imagine you would end up doing and how would you feel about it?**

Words -> Narrative
~~OF OUR LIVES~~

CREATE STORIES

Uncertainty

Growth

Risk

Resilience

Mistake

Innovation +
Creativity

Failure

Accountability

Where do you choose to focus?

- the problem
- the fear
- the mistake
- the shame
- the repair
- the learning
- the resilience
- the next right thing



What makes us stuck?



Shame

Guilt

Denial / Avoidance

Confusion / Fear

What Helps?



**Psychological
Safety**

Growth Mindset

**Relationships +
Community**

How Do We as Educators Create Frames?

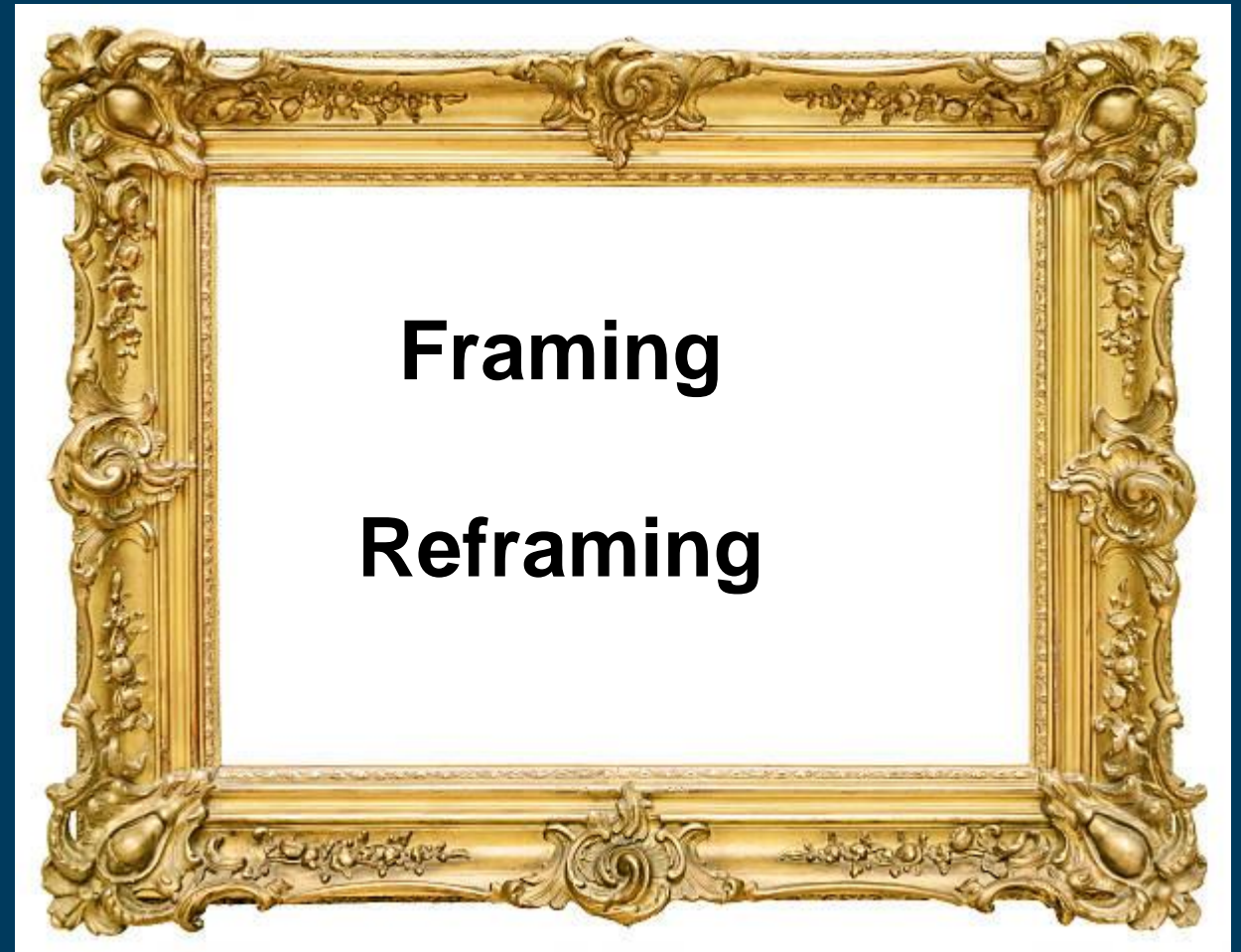
**Frames Make Meaning +
Edit the Story**

Require Trust + Relationship

sense of belonging

unconditional positive regard / feeling
seen

humor



RESILIENCE

Resilient people... possess three characteristics:

a staunch acceptance of reality

a deep belief, often buttressed by strongly held values,
that life is meaningful

an uncanny ability to improvise

Failing Well and Embracing Uncertainty

Growth

Resilience

Innovation +
Creativity

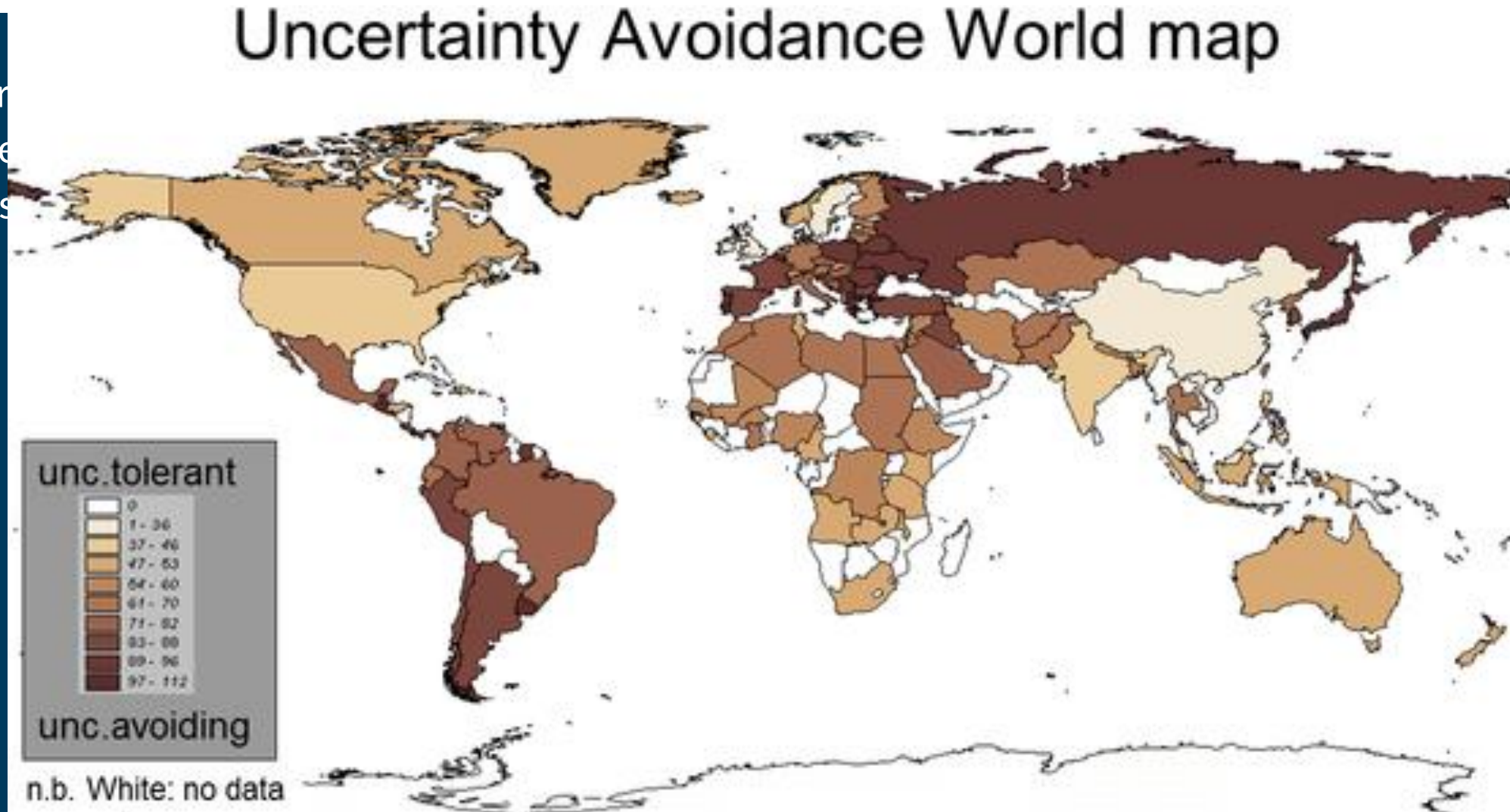
Accountability

Confidence and Trust



Uncertainty Avoidance

- Geer
- Socie
- Does



Failure across culture

- Avoid simplification and generalization, more research is needed
- Much current research from perspective of Western (white/heteronormative) models
 - Western models influenced by 'ideology of individualism' versus accounting for interdependency valued in other cultures
 - Success orientation may be a common protective factor
- Not the case that everyone has equal license to fail intelligently

Culture also of a

- Business
- Family unit
- Organization
- And more!



What do you think?

Spend a few minutes journaling...

- 1- What were you taught as a child about failure and mistakes? How has this changed throughout your life?
- 2- What has helped you become more comfortable with navigating uncertainty and taking healthy risks?

As a professional...

- 1- How does it feel to think about your students (or colleagues) making mistakes or failing? What would be acceptable or good failures for your students (colleagues)?
- 2- How does your organization broadly handle uncertainty and risk, and how do you support students in handling uncertainty and risk?

Case Studies

Mei had received a full-time job offer for after graduation with a tech company that she has interned with for several summers. However in November while in a semester abroad in Paris she learns that her offer has been rescinded due to market issues. She plans to graduate in May the semester following her study abroad experience.

Mei reaches out to the on-site coordinator for her program for emotional support after hearing this and is very upset. She feels that it is too late to receive another offer before graduation and that she will not be able to use optional practical training (OPT) to work in the US following graduation.

How can this staff member advise Mei to tap in to skills she has developed in her experience abroad to move forward?

Case Studies

Luis is excited to study abroad and a high achieving student who chose the program in part because of partner university reputation and ranking. Advisor remembers a history of Luis needing multiple meetings and reminders to take initiative during the study abroad application process. Luis arrives abroad and emails study abroad advisor back in the US on the first day in country that he is unable to register for the classes he needs to take at the local university. Feeling upset and angry that this isn't easier and that he doesn't have any priority as senior, being advised by his program to wait and continue to look for openings in the classes over next week or two as "usually spaces open up". He tells you that he's been advised by on-site staff not to reach out to the university directly as they don't think it will help at all, but tells advisor in the US that he's planning to go to the university registrar tomorrow with his mother, who is with him in Spain, to "see what they can do".

Identify in this case study elements of potential or perceived failure or mistakes, as well as risk-taking and uncertainty for both the student and you, the advisor. Considering these elements, how would you advise this student?

Merci beaucoup!

*"I'm not afraid of storms,
for I'm learning how to sail
my ship."*

-Louisa May Alcott

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