

# Understanding the social and emotional needs of first-gen students

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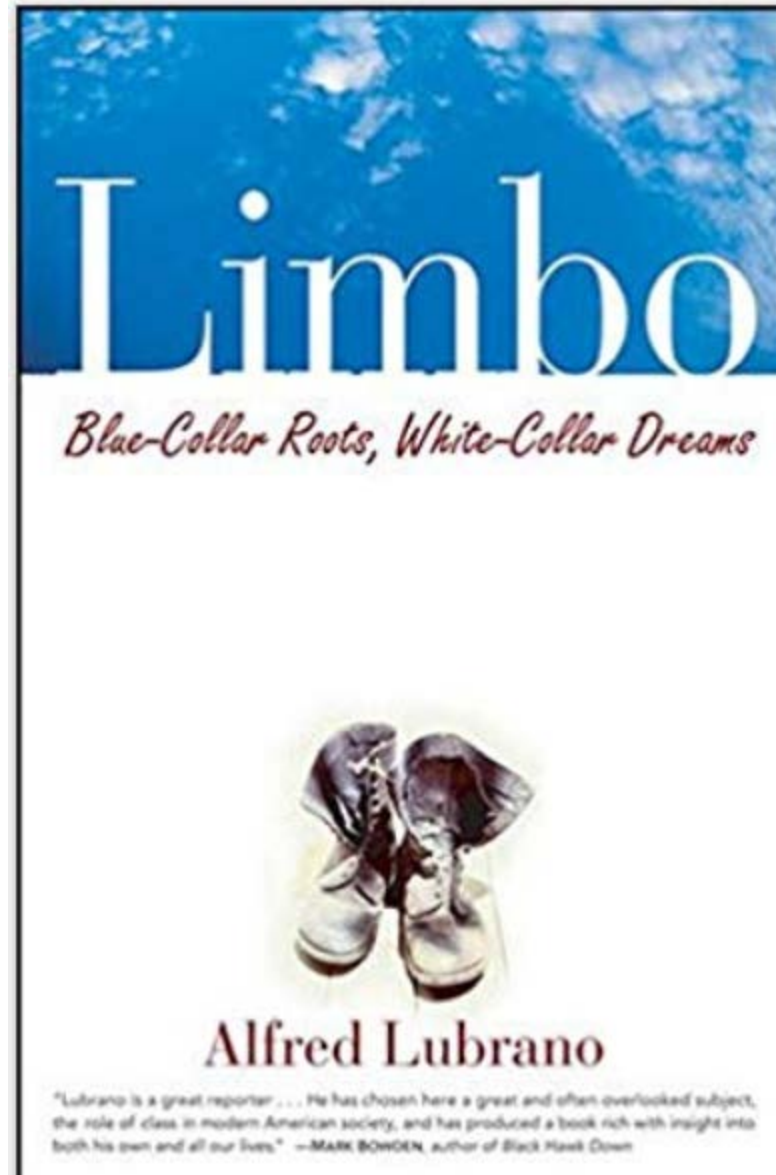
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# Our model



# Think-pair-share exercise #1

## Role of families

- ▶ How does the family's support for, or disapproval of, the Straddler's desire to go to college affect the process of applying to and matriculating at a college?

# TPS #1

## Additional questions

- ▶ Lubrano calls the disapproving families “black hole families”
- ▶ Were there any pressures on you to stay close to home, perhaps not even attend college?
- ▶ Even supportive families may urge their Straddler sons and daughters to pursue certain majors and avoid others; Lubrano’s parents did not understand his desire to be a journalist
- ▶ How did you choose a college to apply to and a major?
- ▶ What feelings accompanied you to campus?

## TPS #2

# Language and how it is used

- ▶ How might conversations differ in blue collar and white collar homes?
- ▶ How might this impact a student's readiness for the college classroom?

## TPS #2

# Additional questions

- ▶ Example: What did you learn about politics at home, compared to what you learned in college (both in the classroom and in the dorm)?
- ▶ Lubrano says knowledge in a blue-collar home is implicit, but language in the white collar home is explicit.
  - ▶ Language in the classroom is explicit.
  - ▶ Did you ever feel more reserved, less verbal, than your non-Straddler classmates?

## TPS #3

# Changes

- ▶ How does college change you, and how does this impact your relationship with family and other connections at home?

## TPS #3

### Additional questions

- ▶ What did it feel like to make meaning of your experiences to those at home? In the context of a liberal arts education and the intellectual growth you experienced.
- ▶ Imposter syndrome: both in class and at home?
- ▶ Where and how do Straddlers belong?



## TPS #4

# The strengths of blue-collar culture

- ▶ What are the strengths of blue-collar culture?
- ▶ How did the strengths of blue collar culture help you in your education and in life?
- ▶ What blue collar values continue to inform your life?

## TPS #5

# Feedback

- ▶ In your life, think of a faculty or staff member's feedback that you received that helped you stay on track. What was that feedback, and how did it help you?

## TPS #6

### Overall

- ▶ What was the hardest part of the college experience for you?
- ▶ Think about the friends you are closest to, and about the family you have built as an adult. Are they Straddlers as well?

# Conclusions and takeaways

- ▶ Straddlers need to belong to two cultures – blue collar and white collar – at the same time
- ▶ The strengths of blue collar culture
- ▶ What do we, as faculty and staff, bring to the table when trying to understand our first gen students?
- ▶ How well are we doing in terms of enhancing social mobility?
- ▶

Social Mobility Index, 2017, selected rankings  
[www.socialmobilityindex.org](http://www.socialmobilityindex.org), N = 1,363 colleges &  
universities in the United States

▶ Mass Maritime Academy	130
▶ <u>Fitchburg State</u>	158
▶ Framingham State	201
▶ Bridgewater State	219
▶ Westfield State	255
▶ Worcester State	256
▶ Salem State	277
▶ Mass College of Lib Arts	328
▶ Mass College Art Design	478
▶	

## And the UMass campuses --

▶ Dartmouth	206
▶ Boston	212
▶ Lowell	324
▶ Amherst	467
▶	