**Color and Casting**

**Color Blind Casting:** is the practice of [casting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casting_(performing_arts)) without considering the actor's [ethnicity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_group), [skin color](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_skin_color), [body shape](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_shape), [sex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex) and/or [gender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender).

**Color Conscious Casting:** we’re aware of the historic discrimination in the entertainment industry,” she said, “and we’re also aware of what it means to put a body of color onstage.”

1. In an all white school or a majority white, how do we provide students the opportunity to experience/participate in theatre of other cultures?

2. Is it ok for a person of a minority ethnicity to portray another ethnicity on stage? Ex. An African American female is auditioning for Vanessa (traditionally Puerto Rican character) from “In the Heights”.

3. A white male and an African American male audition for the part of Elder Price (“Book of Mormon”). They are both equally talented and equally brilliant. Who do you think gets cast? Why? Is this justified?

4. Is it possible to truly be “color blind” when casting a show? Is it a good thing?

5. Should the role of Alexander Hamilton or George Washington in the iconic musical “Hamilton” be open to white actors? What about when it comes to high schools? Can it be done at any school?

6. Some shows have characters of specific nationalities. “Thoroughly Modern Millie” features the following two characters:

*Ching Ho: A Chinese immigrant working to bring his mother to the United States. Younger brother of Bun Foo and henchman to Mrs. Meers. Sings and speaks in chinese.*

*Bun Foo: A Chinese immigrant working to bring his mother to the United States. Older brother of Ching Ho and henchman to Mrs. Meers. Sings and speaks in chinese.*

Does this mean a school without Chinese speaking students should not do this show? Do you see a way to cast this with out students from the described nationality?

7. Should high school shows perform shows that use racial slurs (where they are time period or socially the norm- or used to show a point)? Even if, for example, a white actor had to use the “N- word” on stage?

8. In 2018, Ithaca High School planned to perform “The Hunchback of Notre Dame”. A white teenager was cast in the lead role of Esmeralda, a 15th-century Roma woman, spurring young student activists to object. Many students believed the part would go to one of [the high school’s students of color](http://www.ithacacityschools.org/tfiles/folder527/2016-2017%20IHS%20SCHOOL%20PROFILE.pdf), who make up 34 percent of the student body. The school ended up canceling the show surrounding the controversy. Comment on this situation.

9. Are shows like “Hairspray” just examples of “white savior” shows or do you think they celebrate diversity and have positive impacts on the audiences they perform for? Do you think “Hairspray” is racially insensitive. Discuss race in the show.

10. Two females audition for the part of Celie (a part traditionally cast as a darker skin toned African American woman) in the “Color Purple”. An African American woman with a lighter skin tone is slightly better than a darker skin toned woman. Who do you cast? Is this a double standard?

11. If a role is written for a particular ethnicity, sexual identity, gender or disability, how far should the creative community go to find an actor who checks that particular box? And should the fact that many traditionally marginalized groups are fighting for better representation be taken into consideration? Who has the right to tell what stories? And who gets to make that decision?