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Before his Saturday concert, the underground rap star spent some time with Notes for Notes students in Santa Barbara.

## Immortal Technique Talks Hip-Hop Shop

Underground Rap Star Meets with Santa Barbara Youth

Monday, March 5, 2012

By [Levi Michaels](#)

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It should come as no surprise that Felipe Andres Coronel, the deft lyricist known as Immortal Technique, is also a skilled professor. Certainly when he and his crew met on Saturday night at Casa de la Raza with a group of aspiring artists from the Notes For Notes program, the Latino community center had the air of a lecture hall. But Coronel, who spoke bluntly about his own failures as a young student growing up in New York City, offered far more practical advice than one would typically find in a classroom.

"I don't care what you rap about," Coronel told the room, which included about half a dozen teens, a few Occupy representatives, and fellow artists DJ Static and Diabolic, who also spoke in brief. "Just involve yourself in what you are speaking about. If you are going to rap about selling drugs or being a pimp, tell me what it's like. Make the story interesting."


The artists also fielded questions on everything from the technical and legal aspects of producing beats, to personal struggles with religion and race. One young rapper broached the subject of Santa Barbara's recent gang problems, admitting that his passion for hip-hop is often questioned because of his ethnicity. The son of a Peruvian father and African-American mother, Coronel encountered similar adversity while growing up, and stressed that learning to love and invest in oneself is essential for overcoming struggle.

With questions squared away, it was time to put theory into practice. Coronel and his crew invited a few precocious producers to demo their beats while rappers laid down rhymes for him to critique. Soon, the whole room formed a circle with folks ad-libbing verses in tandem and offering advice to one another. Shortly after, DJ Static, Diabolic, and Immortal Technique moved the lesson to Casa de la Raza's stage for an incensed night of underground hip-hop education.

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- [Immortal Technique's War of the Words](#)

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