Music education in the United States has notoriously focused on the performance of Western art music at the expense of legitimizing many other genres and forms of music making. Often popular music genres (e.g., hip hop, rock, pop, country, Latin) are considered inferior to Western art music and are rarely addressed in K-12 or higher education contexts. Because of this focus, less than 20% of the United States school music population engages in music education courses (Elpus & Abril, 2011) alienating a significant number of students who may wish to develop skills in other genres.

The purpose of this historical research project is to illuminate the role of access within a culturally responsive framework. Grounded in conflict theory and Pierre Bourdieu’s work, this historical research project focuses on the rise and restructuring of World Famous V.I.P. Records in Long Beach, California, as a resource for young musicians to develop their culturally-identified musical skills. Data included interviews with key stakeholders, documents and pictures from V.I.P., and historical events during the layered transformation of V.I.P.

Kelvin Anderson and his brother, Cletus, opened V.I.P.’s Long Beach location in 1978 which housed two record labels in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, V.I.P. then became a portal for music executives who didn’t know anything about these rap artists. Concurrently, Anderson built an in-store recording studio with the help of Los Angeles producer, Sir Jinx, in part to bolster V.I.P.’s role as a “safe haven” for young people in the community. By providing this musical outlet, Anderson opened music learning and production opportunities.
opportunities not offered in school music education which, in turn, played a key role in breaking young urban artists such as Snoop Dogg, Warren G and Nate Dogg (then a trio known as 213) who recorded the demo that led to their big breaks.

By 2003, V.I.P. stopped turning a profit and is currently in the process of redesigning and revisiting their music educational vision. The current plan is to create a black history music museum with a *creative space* for individuals to develop their own music. Because school music education is still grounded in Western art music, Kelvin Anderson continues to open opportunities for young adults to embrace their musical passions.