Coyote Learns Indigenous Academic Writing

EDITORIAL

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ABSTRACT

The Indigenous Business and Public Administration journal, IBAPA, strives to be a space where Native and Indigenous authors can de-colonize themselves from academic constraints and have a place where they can share their work to the greater Native and Indigenous community who could immediately benefit from their research. To accomplish this, IBAPA strongly encourages its authors to write in conversational styles, appropriate for their communities, while still retaining high standards for scholarship rigor. IBAPA's expectations for its contributors is described through a Native-style Coyote story.

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Welcome to the second edition of Indigenous Business and Public Administration (IBAPA). As with all new ventures, new journals should have something of a value proposition to offer both readers and authors. As IBAPA begins to take form, we believe it offers a fairly obvious value to readers: IBAPA delivers ideas which can help in the management and success of Indigenous organizations. However, for authors, IBAPA offers something truly unique. We offer you a place to be yourself and to tell *your* story.

The editorial team has been insistent from its inception that IBAPA can be something different...something distinct from other academic outlets. This is why, in the call for papers for our second edition, we asked authors to address what it is, in their opinion, that makes Indigenous business (and Indigenous business scholarship) unique. After reviewing the submissions presented here for publication, one distinction is clear: Social identity is a clear motivator that drives our endeavors.

In deeply personal essays, two pieces in this edition offer insights into the role that the authors' own Indigenous roots have played in shaping their careers in the fields of economics (Chavis) and marketing (Welch). Our third piece offers a fantastic framework describing the interaction between Aboriginal identity and business objectives (Manganda et al.). All three contributions offer much to say about Indigeneity and how it affects our organizations and our scholarship.

What strikes me about each piece is this: They are all uniquely powerful because the authors have infused their own identities and stories into the narratives they tell. This is why the editorial team at IBAPA is encouraging contributors to write in their own style as desired, using language and methods that will draw out nuances in each story that cannot be captured easily in a more formal academic style.

Indeed, IBAPA is a space where Indigenous authors can de-colonize themselves from the academic constraints that have been placed upon us, at least temporarily. Most academic journals encourage authors to write in the somber third person, as if our first-person identity does not matter or inform our ideas. To the contrary, our identity as Indigenous people is deeply entwined with and within our academic theories. Since IBAPA is by 'us' and for us, we want contributors to feel free to communicate in whatever style they feel is most effective for the message and audience at hand. Perhaps this will also allow IBAPA articles to be read and consumed more broadly by those within our own Indigenous communities, an audience which, sadly, is not intended to be reached by most of our mainstream academic writing.

We have previously written on the subject of social identity and Native American ventures (Stewart et al. 2014) in which we claim that Native American ventures should offer something verifiably 'Native' in order to be considered authentically Indigenous and, therefore, valuable to consumers. IBAPA is our way of operationalizing our theory in the academic space. By offering pieces of ourselves in our writing, we offer verifiably Indigenous perspectives that make our contributions authentic and valuable to the academic and, hopefully, non-academic communities as well.

In the spirit of encouraging creative formats for our future contributing authors, we offer you a story that explores this new venture, IBAPA. The story, written by first author Joe Gladstone, is told in the tradition of our own Native American communities situated in the Pacific Northwest United States. Coyote stories are used for many scenarios, including creation. As such, Coyote is a perfect character to muse about the nature of academia, business scholarship (Verbos et al. 2011) and new old ways of doing things in the creation of a new journal. We hope you enjoy and learn from the tale.

COYOTE LEARNS INDIGENOUS ACADEMIC WRITING

Coyote was walking along when he saw Mouse sitting at a table next to the trail. She was tapping on a flat stone on top of the table while staring into another flat stone propped sideways from the table.

'Ho, Mouse! What is that song you're tapping with your fingers?' Asked Coyote.

'Song?' Mouse replied quizzically. Coyote often said crazy things, but this one didn't make sense to her.

'The song you're playing on that stone,' Coyote replied.

'Oh!' Mouse replied. 'Okay. That makes sense, Coyote.'

Coyote perked his ears. 'What makes sense?'

'You see me tapping on this computer and you think I'm playing a song, Coyote.'

'Well, that's what I see and hear you doing Mouse. I'm also wondering why you're staring at that other stone, there.'

'C'mon 'round this side of the table, Coyote,' Mouse said and motioned him over with a slight lift of her chin and twist of her head. 'Let me teach you something.' Coyote, ever the curious one, eagerly hopped to Mouse's side of the table in one bounce, excited to see what she was going to show him. The first thing he saw was that the upright stone had a picture of a sheet of paper on it and the stone she was tapping on was covered with buttons, themselves covered with letters, numbers, and symbols.

'What is this funny rock?' He asked Mouse, first sniffing and then pointing at the object with his lips.

'It's a laptop computer,' Mouse replied. 'It's a … uh . . . ' She paused to think about how to explain a computer to Coyote in a way he could understand. 'It's a type of machine that can do many things. Right now, I'm using it to write a story.'

'And please don't touch that, Coyote,' Mouse added as she shooed his hand away from the laptop screen when he tried to reach for it.

'Ahhh,' Coyote dragged out his response as he redirected his hand to his chin and began stroking it with his thumb and index finger—as if that's what he intended to do the entire time. 'But why do you want to write down your story when you can just tell me your story while you're sitting here?'

'Do you have any coffee?' Coyote interjected before Mouse could answer.

Mouse was about to point to her bag with a thermos inside, but Coyote was already digging into it. Before she could completely say, 'I have some in my thermos,' he had already placed the thermos on the table and opened it. He then reached into his satchel, removed two coffee mugs, and filled both to the edge of the brim.

'Here. Have some coffee,' he said to Mouse, pushing one cup toward her, spilling a little from the overfilled cup during the shove.

'Thank you for offering me some of my own coffee, Coyote,' She replied.

WHY IBAPA EXISTS

'But why do you want to write down your story when you can tell it to me right now?' Coyote asked again before carefully sipping from his mug, holding it steady so as to not slosh coffee over the rim.

'I can tell you my story now, Coyote. But only you would hear it. I want to share my story with others,' Mouse replied. 'So, I'm writing it down so that it can be passed onto many others.'

'But why don't you just go to others to tell your story? Or why don't you have a feast and then everybody can hear your story when they come over?'

Coyote was clearly sincere with his questions. He was used to the ways that were usually done by people.

'I could do that Coyote. And I do that sometimes,' Mouse replied. 'But I can only get out every now and then to meet people so I can share my story.'

'But you if you have a feed, you can have them come to you.'

'That's true, Coyote. But then only some people will be able to make it over to hear what I want to share with them.' Mouse paused for a moment and asked Coyote, 'Do you know what a "conference" is?'

Coyote looked up to his left as he thought about the word Mouse asked him. He then smiled and looked at her. 'Yes. I think I've heard about a conference. The Elk people often have them. They tell a lot of stories to each other when they're together.'

'That's right Coyote. But how many times do you see the Elk people get together for conferences?'

'Oh. Every year,' Coyote answered confidently. He liked it when he knew the right things.

'Only once each year?' Mouse continued.

'Yes.' Coyote was feeling good that he knew the answers to Mouse's questions.

'When in the year do they have their conferences, Coyote?'

'In the summer. Then they break up into smaller groups when it starts to snow,' Coyote answered confidently.

'How many other types of people go to Elk conferences?' Mouse added.

Coyote looked up to the left again, imagining elk herds in his head as he remembered seeing them. 'Not many. They seem to like to stick to themselves.'

'That's the problem with conferences, Coyote. People from specific walks of life tend to go only to their conferences. I want the stories that I tell to go to all different types of people. That's why I write them down.'

Coyote took a sip of coffee, looked into his mug, and noticed it was empty. He refilled his mug with Mouse's coffee and took a long slurp. 'What kind of stories are you telling?' He asked, before he took another slurp.

INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING

'I'm telling a story about business in the Native Way.' Mouse answered.

Coyote took another loud slurp of his coffee and thought about Mouse's answer. His ears stood erect when he realized what she meant.

'Oh! You mean commerce. I know about that. I was taught that by you and others' (Gladstone 2021).

'That's right, Coyote.' Mouse said. 'And commerce is also called "business".'

'Oh? Hunya,' Coyote nodded as he took in a new word to him.

Mouse continued, 'I tell more than stories about business. I also tell stories about public administration.'

Mouse could tell by the way Coyote paused and held his coffee mug at his lips while staring at her that he needed more information. She added:

'Public administration is a little bit different than business. In business you do trade with others…'

'Using money,' Coyote said, finishing Mouse's sentence. 'I know about that. You and others taught me about that' (Gladstone 2021).

'Yes, Coyote. Using money. There's more to it, but for now we'll leave it there,' Mouse said.

'Fair enough,' Coyote replied just before taking another sip of coffee. 'But what is "public administration"?'

'It's kind of like commerce, but instead of trying to make money, you're providing services for your community. Your organization exists to help your people,' Mouse answered.

Coyote's eyes widened the same time his ears stood upright. He smiled and said, 'I remember that! You taught me about it when I had that job running that health program!' (Gladstone 2017).

'Yes, Coyote, that was public administration!' Mouse was happy that Coyote remembered that story.

'So, is that what you're doing now? Telling stories about business and public administration?' Coyote asked.

ACADEMIC WRITING AND IBAPA MANUAL OF STYLE

'Yes, that's what I'm doing now,' Mouse answered.

'Where are you sending your story?'

'I'm sending it to a journal.'

'A journal?'

'Yes. It's a place where people who want to tell stories about business and public administration can tell their stories. More important, it's not just a place to tell stories. It's a place where people who want to learn about business and public administration done in Native and Indigenous ways can find stories that might help them when they need help leaning how to make their businesses and public services better.'

'A journal,' Coyote stated while looking at Mouse's paper on his computer screen. 'Is there any special way I'm supposed to write to a journal?'

Mouse answered, 'Most journals have their rules telling you how you are supposed to write your stories. But the one I'm sending my story to wants me and others to tell our stories in our own ways. In Native and Indigenous ways.'

'What are Native and Indigenous ways, Mouse?' Coyote asked.

'Well, Coyote, just like the way you and I are talking now.'

'Oh?' Mouse's answer stopped Coyote mid-sip in his coffee. 'So, if I want to tell people how to run their businesses and public service programs, I can just start talking like I do when I'm talking to you and other people?' (Verbos, Kennedy, and Gladstone 2011).

Coyote finished sipping his coffee, clearly deep in thought as he was doing so. He continued:

'I was just thinking, Mouse. When I talk to the anthropologists from the universities, they tell me they want to tell my stories to their journals. But I once looked at the journals where they shared my story. They wrote in fancy university talk. So, isn't that how you're supposed to write to a journal?'

'That's true Coyote.' Mouse answered. 'But each journal has its own rules for how you're supposed to write to them. Some even have rules about how you are supposed to format your story…'

'Format?' Coyote interrupted.

'Oh. Yes. Sorry Coyote,' Mouse replied, not minding Coyote's interruption. 'Formatting is a type of rule telling you how you're supposed to make your story look.'

Mouse paused. And continued:

'Actually … when you write to a journal, your story actually is called a "paper".'

'I thought you said this was a computer.' Coyote pointed his lips toward the screen in front of him and Mouse.

'Well. Yes,' Mouse smiled. 'But sometimes people keep old words for new things when those things are like the old things they replaced.'

'Oh. Like "Coke",' Coyote replied. 'I asked Javelina for a Coke and he gave me something called an R-C.'

Mouse chuckled. 'Yes. Like that, Coyote. At one time papers were written on real paper. But now we write them on computers. Makes it a lot easier to send them to the journals.'

Both sat quietly until Coyote took another sip of coffee and broke the silence: 'So. What about that thing you were saying about the rules for formatting a paper?'

'Oh, that's right,' Mouse said as she was broken from her nostalgia. 'Thanks Coyote.' She continued:

'Different journals tell stories by and for different writers and readers. Do you remember how the Elk talk among themselves?'

'Yes.'

'You ever notice that they talk differently than the Deer, even though they are kind of the same type of people?'

'Yes! Although the Deer people aren't as noisy as the Elk people, they do speak the same way.' Coyote nodded as he shared his knowledge with Mouse.

'That's kind of the same way with journal papers, Coyote.' Mouse continued. 'Even though they use the same language to tell their stories, they have rules for how those stories will be told.'

'Why do they do that?' Coyote asked.

'Because the people who read stories in academic journals have been taught to read and write in a certain ways that are related to their profession. For example,

business researchers are taught how to read business journals and so are taught to write in business journal styles. Health researchers write their journal stories a certain way, and so learn to read that certain way. Following a certain style makes it easy for the readers trained in the ways of the style to follow the story.'

'Oh, I forgot to say,' Mouse added after a brief pause, 'the rules for how a story is told are called a "style".'

'Oh,' Coyote grunted, to let Mouse know he was listening and keeping up, and asked, 'What is the "style" for the journal you're telling your story to?'

'Good question, Coyote. It's called A-P-A. Which is short for American Psychological Association. And that's even short for American Psychological Association Manual of Style. It's a common style for business journals.'

Coyote's eyes widened and he remained staring at Mouse. Clearly confused.

'Yeah. That's a lot there, isn't it Coyote,' Mouse said as she read his expression.

'I don't know this . . . A-P-A, Mouse. How can I tell my story if I don't know A-P-A?'

'Remember when I told you that this computer is a type of machine that can do many things?'

Coyote nodded.

'Not only does it let me write my paper, but it's also connected to something called the Internet.' Mouse looked up to see Coyote's reaction to Internet. He grinned widely at her.

'I know what the Internet is, Mouse. I carry it in my satchel.'

Mouse could only nod, thinking to herself, *Yep, that certainly is a bottomless bag he carries around. It has everything in it.*

'So... what's in the Internet that's on your machine?' Coyote asked, bringing Mouse back to their conversation.

'The Internet has many instructions that teach you how to write in APA.'

'APA?'

'Yes, Coyote. The usual way to write A-P-A.'

'Ah,' Coyote nodded in understanding. 'How do I use the Internet to learn APA?'

'Just type "APA Owl" in your Internet search bar and the first thing you should see is...'

'Purdue OWL,' Coyote interrupted. His nose was inside his satchel as he was looking into it as Mouse was giving instruction.

'That's right, Coyote,' Mouse replied.

Coyote continued looking in his satchel and asked, 'What is "7th Edition"? Is that important?'

'APA likes to change the rules sometimes, but 7th Edition isn't a big change from 6th Edition. I and other storytellers can use 6th Edition for the journal I'm sending my story to. Or to use journal writing language, "submitting my paper to".'

Coyote had finished looking inside his satchel and returned to his coffee mug, which Mouse noticed was still full to the brim. 'What's the difference between 6th and 7th Editions?'

'7th Edition is more clear about referencing the Internet.' Mouse saw that Coyote was about to ask another question, so she quickly added before he could ask: '"Referencing" is a whole different lesson for later Coyote. Actually, if you ask around, there are people who can teach you what referencing means.'

Coyote kept his mouth slightly open as he stared at her. He then lifted his coffee mug to it and took a sip—as if that's what he intended to do the entire time.

WRITING TO IBAPA

'Beside writing your paper to look like APA, what else should I do, Mouse, when I want to tell my story to the journal you are writing to?' Coyote asked after sipping his coffee.

'Actually, Coyote,' Mouse replied, 'the journal I'm writing to pretty much only wants you to use the APA layout for telling your story.'

'Layout?' Coyote slightly cocked his head toward Mouse as he asked her his question.

'Yes, Coyote. How your paper is organized. Where you place the title, subject headers, and subheaders. That's layout.'

Mouse continued.

'There are some APA writing rules, too. Double space your lines. Use parentheses when referencing somebody and format your reference list according to APA instructions.' Mouse paused, and continued: 'For the most part Coyote, the journal that I'm telling my story to wants you to make your paper look the APA way for layout and references.'

'Why?'

'It makes it easier for others to read your story. Especially the peer reviewers. They are trained to read in APA, so writing that way helps them know what to look for in your story.'

'Peer reviewers?'

PEER REVIEW

'Ah ... yes, Coyote. Peer reviewers.' Mouse grinned at Coyote as she continued. 'We all know that you sometimes like to tell really broad tales Coyote. So, there are people who volunteer their time to read your story before the journal prints it.'

'So, they will make sure I'm not telling crazy stories. Right?' Coyote had a slight grin when he spoke.

'Well, that.' Mouse replied. 'But also, to help you make sure that the story you tell is correct. Sometimes Coyote, you tell stories that you think are correct, but might have some mistakes. The peer reviewers are experts in the area of the journal I'm writing to. They know about the subjects that stories sent to it talk about. They look for mistakes and advise you how you can fix them so the journal can publish them.'

Mouse paused, took a sip of her coffee, and frowned when she discovered it was now cold. She continued. 'Do you remember when you asked me about the song I was playing, and I told you that what you were seeing was actually something different than you thought it was?'

'Yes,' Coyote nodded.

'That's peer review. I pointed out your mistake and helped you correct it.'

'Oh. So, the reviewers are there to help me.'

'Yes, Coyote.'

BLIND REVIEW & JOURNAL REPUTATION

'And if I don't like what peer reviewers say about my story, I can eat them?'

'Well, no,' Mouse frowned. 'But it would be hard for you to find out who your reviewers are. This journal has something called a "blind review".'

'Oh? So, I don't know who reviewed my story?'

'Yes. And the journal doesn't tell them that it was you who wrote your story. They don't know that it was you who wrote your story,' Mouse replied. 'This ensures that they don't accept or reject your story based on who you are. They make their decision on how accurate your story is after you make corrections if they ask you to make them.'

'Ah,' Coyote nodded. He then asked, 'Why does this journal insist I write in APA and have strangers make sure that my story is honest and correct?'

'APA and peer review are ways to make sure that the journal is seen by many as a good and trusted journal for stories about Native and Indigenous business and public administration,' Mouse said.

'Oh! That's "cred",' Coyote said. 'Reputation.'

'That's right, Coyote.'

'I have a reputation!'

'And the journal I'm writing wants its reputation to be known as the authoritative and best journal about Native and Indigenous business and public administration,' Mouse replied, adding, 'And simply as good and trusted as other business and public administration journals.'

THE IBAPA STYLE

'How do I tell my story to the journal you're writing to, Mouse?' Coyote asked. 'Do I have to write it the same way that the anthropologists wrote their stories about me to their journals? I don't like the way they write. It doesn't sound like me.'

Coyote paused, and continued:

'I also don't think that the people who want to hear my stories listen the same way that the anthropologists talk.'

'Absolutely right, Coyote!' Mouse replied, excitedly. 'The journal I'm writing to is very explicit that while they want you to be accurate in *what* you say and how you should make your paper *look*, they really want you to write in the way that you speak. Let me read you something from their Internet page about the way they want you to write to them and their readers:'

> *We … seek to decolonize the academic space. It is important for Indigenous scholars to communicate in a manner that is culturally acceptable and effective for their own people. As such, IBAPA encourages a conversational tone with authors who are comfortable writing in such a manner* (IBAPA 2023).

Coyote took a long slurp from his mug, deep in thought the entire time.

'Like the way we're talking now?' He asked.

'Exactly,' Mouse replied.

'But what if I'm somebody else who doesn't talk like me all the time? Can I write my paper in a different way?' Coyote was genuinely curious.

'Exactly, Coyote,' Mouse replied. 'The journal wants you to write in the way you would talk to somebody who was sitting next to you. Or, if you want to think about it another way, write as if you were talking to a lot of people at once.'

'So, if I was one of the Elk people, I can write like I was talking to other Elk people?' Coyote asked.

'Sort of,' Mouse answered. 'Think of it as if you were an Elk person and wanted your story to be understood by the Deer people, the Badger people, the Goat people, et cetera. When you write your story, write it in a way all can understand and learn from it.'

'Oh! Speaking of Goat people,' Coyote interjected, 'Goat gave me some coffee beans. I see that your coffee is now cold. You can have some. I remember our story about commerce (Gladstone 2021). I think this is a fair trade for you teaching me about how to write to the journal that you're writing to.'

Mouse smiled. 'Thank you, Coyote. That's very kind of you.'

'I have a story that I want to share. I'm going to go write it now.' At that, Coyote stood, brushed himself off (even though he didn't pick up any dust while sitting next to Mouse), and bounded off down the trail.

Mouse watched as he disappeared over the hill. She then thought about the conversation she had with Coyote and said to herself:

'I think I have a better story lesson to share.'

She ground the beans Coyote gave her and made a fresh pot of coffee. She enjoyed it as she revised her paper, proofread it, and hit the 'submit' button on the journal web page.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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