



Writing Tip Wednesday in the Field

New signs have recently appeared on a couple of external doors on the CDC Chamblee campus, proclaiming “EGRESS ONLY.” The signs cause confusion on a couple of levels. First—as an anonymous employee helpfully pointed out on the sign above—the language is most definitely not plain. Many people won’t immediately understand what “egress” means, and the vague graphic doesn’t help much. The signs would obviously be a lot more effective if they just said “Exit only.”

But even if the signs were in friendlier language, they were placed on the *inside* of the glass doors. So, you see them only when you’re leaving the building (in other words, following the rules and using the door correctly). Anyone approaching from the outside sees a blank piece of paper. You could open the door and ingress—er, enter—without ever knowing you weren’t supposed to.

So, what’s the lesson here? Clear communication isn’t only about the language you use. Design and placement matter, too.