

# Lecture 12

## Speaking in small groups

# What is small group?

- A collection of three to twelve people that assemble for a specific purpose.
- A problem-solving small group is formed to solve a particular problem.
- Members of a small group influence one another through communication.

# Leadership in small groups

- Leadership is the ability to influence group members so as to help achieve the goals of the group.
- implied leader – a group member to whom other members defer because of her or his rank, expertise, or other quality.
- Emergent leader – a group member who emerges as a leader during the group's deliberation.

- Designated leader – a person who is elected or appointed as leader when the group is formed.

- Functions of leadership:
  - procedural needs – routine “housekeeping” actions necessary for the efficient conduct of business in a small group.
  - Task needs – substantive actions necessary to help a small group complete its assigned task.
  - Maintenance needs – communicative actions necessary to maintain interpersonal relations in a small group.

# Responsibilities in a small group

- Commit yourself to the goals of your group
- Fulfil individual assignments
- Avoid interpersonal conflicts
- Encourage full participation
- Keep discussion on track

# The reflective-thinking method

- A five-step method for directing discussion in a problem-solving small group.
- Define the problem
- Analyse the problem
- Establish criteria for solutions
- Generate potential solutions
- Select the best solutions

# Presenting the recommendations of the group

- Oral report – a speech presenting the findings, conclusions, decisions, etc. of a small group.
- Symposium – a public presentation in which several people present prepared speeches on different aspects of the same topic.
- Panel discussion – a structured conversation on a given topic among several people in front of an audience.

# Summary

- When a group has effective leadership, it usually makes better decisions than do individuals by themselves.
- An effective leader helps a group reach its goals by fulfilling procedural needs, task needs and maintenance needs.
- As you develop your skills in group communication, you should be prepared to assume a leadership role whenever necessary.