



### *Apprenticeship in Literacy: Transitions Across Reading and Writing* by Linda J. Dorn, Cathy French and Tammy Jones

#### **A Balanced Reading Program**

A balanced reading program includes a range of literacy activities, carefully selected materials for each activity, and a responsive teacher who knows how to structure literacy interactions that move children to higher levels of understanding. In an apprenticeship approach, the teacher asks the following questions:

- What can the children do alone? What can the children do with my help?
- What types of materials will support the children in applying their current knowledge, strategies, and skills?
- How does each type of literacy activity support the children in building effective reading systems?
- What sort of guidance do I provide the children in each activity?

The components of a balanced reading program would include many opportunities for children to learn about the reading process through the following:

- Being read to. This allows children to hear more complex language patterns that would be too difficult for them to read by themselves. As the teacher reads, the children listen and respond to the story.
- Rereading familiar books. This allows children independently to practice cue integration and strategy application on familiar materials. Teacher support can be lessened because the familiar texts provide their own support system.
- Shared reading. This allows children to learn important concepts about reading and to practice effective behavior in a group assisted activity. As the teacher shares an enlarged text with a small group of children, she creates instructional conversations that guide the children to apply their knowledge and strategies to the reading situation.
- Guided reading. This allows children to practice effective reading strategies on texts at their instructional level with the guidance of their teacher. As the children read supportive texts with a minimum of new challenges, the teacher observes their processing behavior and adjusts her degree of support to accommodate their problem-solving actions.

The overlapping and reciprocal benefits of the four types of reading events are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1** The reciprocal relationship between four reading events.

