TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS OF
The Little Hummingbird

by Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas

Text Type: Literary

TEXT DESCRIPTION	PLACEMENT
Based on a South American folktale, this is the story of a tiny hummingbird who tries to put out a great forest fire. While the other larger and stronger animals of the forest look on, the hummingbird brings water, one drop at a time from the stream, to place on the raging fire. When the other animals incredulously ask what she is doing, the hummingbird simply replies, "I am doing what I can."	The relatively low quantitative complexity and higher qualitative complexity make this text an excellent vehicle for teaching students to determine the message or moral in a story and place this text solidly in the 2-3 grade band as a read aloud.

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE

QUANTITATIVE MEASURE OF THE TEXT: AD550L
ASSOCIATED BAND LEVEL: 2-3

QUALITATIVE MEASURES

MEANING/PURPOSE: Moderately Complex
The text contains multiple levels of meaning, with a strong message that must be inferred. The central message is conveyed subtly, since the main character's actions do not result in what would typically be defined as success (putting out the fire).

TEXT STRUCTURE: Moderately Complex
The storyline Is clear and chronological, but unpredictable. The way the main character reacts to the fire, and the result of those actions, is not what most readers would expect. The illustrations, although beautiful and detailed, are abstract, offering little support in comprehending the text.

LANGUAGE FEATURES: Moderately Complex
The sentence structure consists primarily of simple and compound sentences. The language is generally easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning. Some vocabulary words may be unfamiliar or have multiple meanings.

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS: Slightly Complex
The animals and experiences portrayed will be unfamiliar to many readers. The intricate black and white artwork created by Haidan artist Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas is in a style that will be unfamiliar to most students.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR READER AND TASK

The text is closely read to help students navigate complexity of meaning, language and structure. Students are guided in carefully examining the response of characters to the fire in order to determine the central message of the story. To emphasize the difference in responses, teachers are asked to read in a different voice for each character. Students also use a role play protocol to more deeply understand the reactions and motivations of each character.
Specific supports for English Language Learners, students with special needs, and students who need enrichment are included in the module.

RATIONALE

This is one of several folktales and fables explored by students in which pollinators are the central characters. Students ask and answer questions about the text (RL.2.1). and role play to prepare to recount the story using key details (RL.2.2). They examine how the characters in the story respond differently to the problem/challenge in order to infer the central message (RL.2.2, RL.2.3), and then synthesize their thinking by writing a paragraph describing the central message in the story (W.2.2).

2M4.1 #10