

OFFERING GRACE: Supporting Distance Learning Students Affected by Hurricane Helene

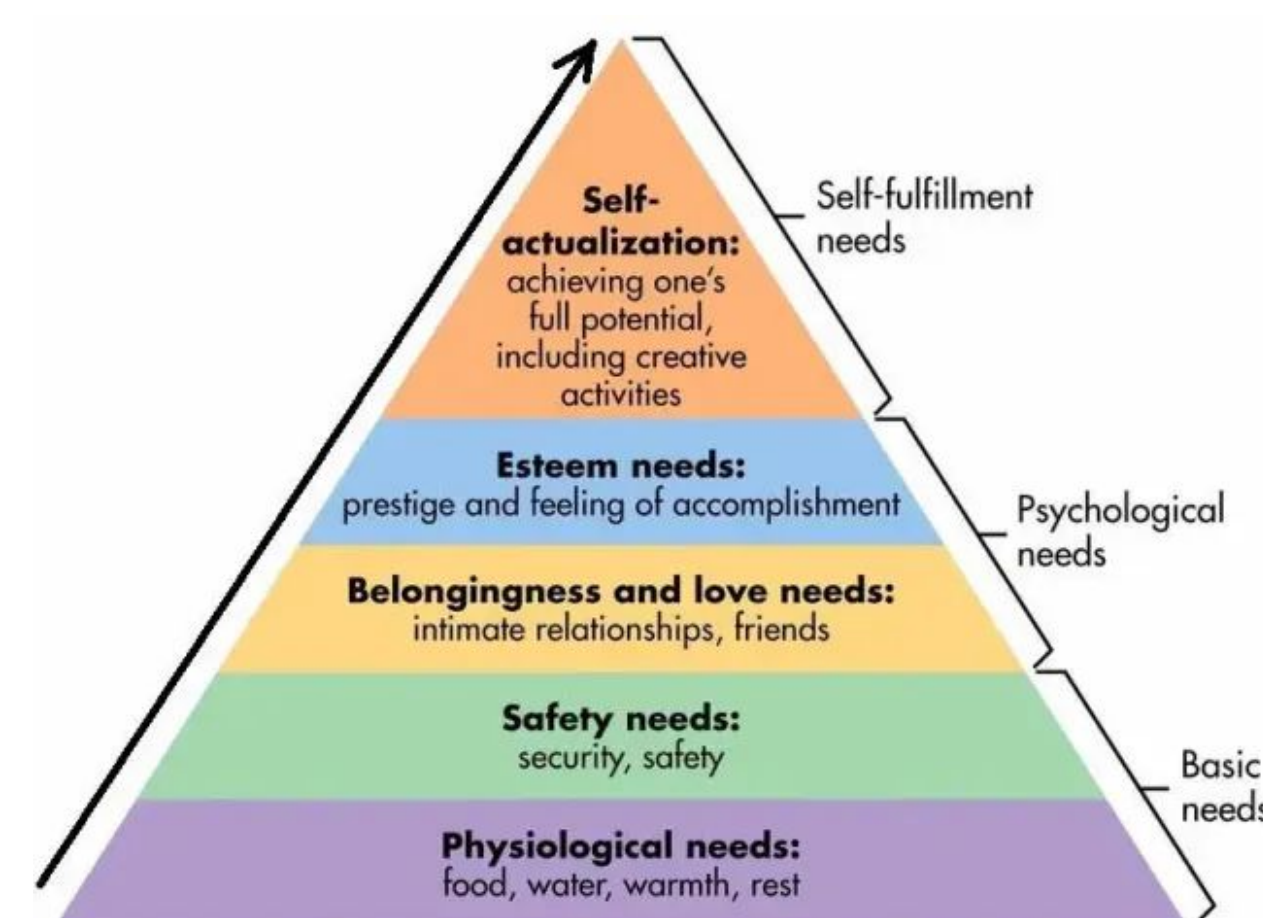
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Introduction

- Hurricane Helene disrupted distance learning. An **innovative** approach was needed to address this disruption.
- "Offering grace" approach: flexibility based on humanistic learning theory.
- Goal: support student well-being, reduce stress, and enhance engagement.

Humanistic Learning Theory (Maslow and Rogers)



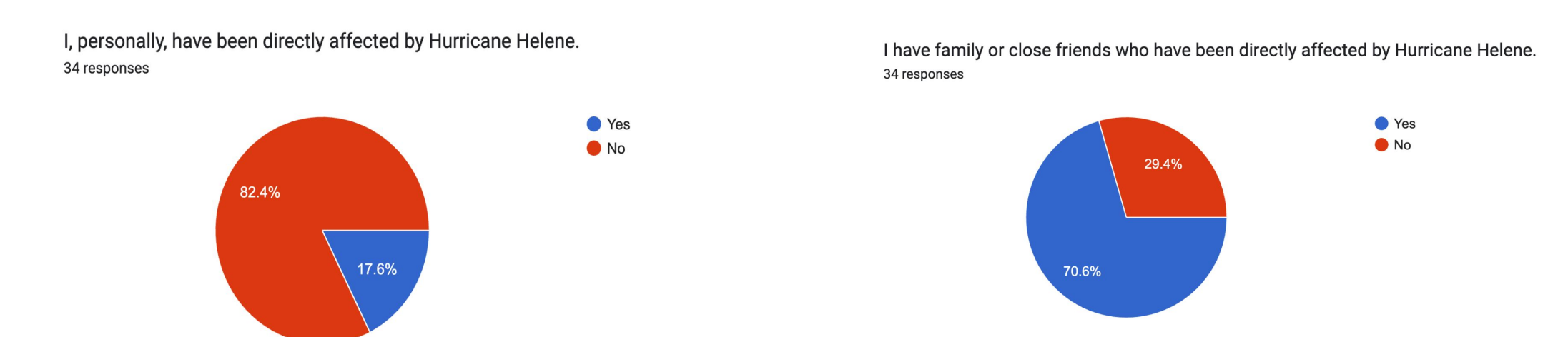
Method

- Surveyed students in asynchronous agricultural education courses via Google Forms.
- Assessed hurricane impact on students and their families.
- Adjusted coursework based on student needs.

A screenshot of a Google Form survey. The first question is "I, personally, have been directly affected by Hurricane Helene." with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". The second question is "I have family or close friends who have been directly affected by Hurricane Helene." with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". Below these is a text box for "Please add anything else you need me to know." and a "Long answer text" label.

Results/ Conclusions

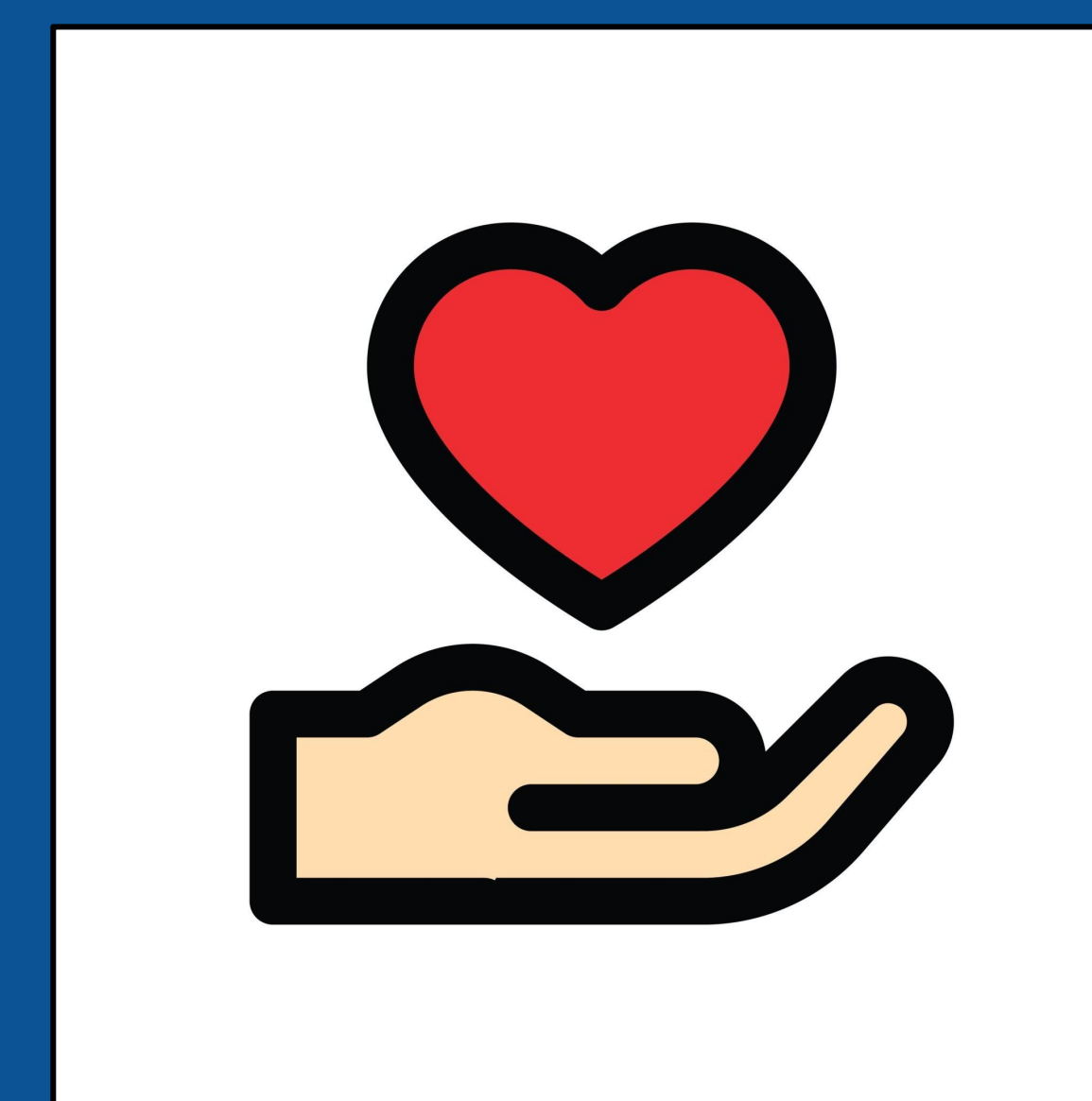
- 17.6% of students directly affected; 70.6% had affected family.
- Students faced issues with infrastructure, displacement, and internet.
- "Offering grace" approach: suspended assignments, extended deadlines.
- All students completed coursework.



- Humanistic learning is valuable in crisis.
- Prioritizing well-being fosters resilience and motivation.
- Student support is essential for student-centered learning.
- Further research: long-term effects of grace-based approaches.

Future Plans

- Formalize policies for academic grace.
- Improve communication during crises.
- Involve students in decisions about their learning.
- Balance flexibility with learning objectives.



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