Original Research

Concept Mapping, Chatbots and GIS: Re-engineering Community-Medicine Teaching for Gen-AI Learners

Urvish Joshi

Community Medicine Department, Narendra Modi Medical College and LG Hospital, Ahmedabad, India

Correspondence: Dr Urvish Joshi, Email: doc.urvish@gmail.com

Abstract

The implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in the study of community medicine presents a possibility to connect to the medical students of Generation Z who tend to study the visual and engaging information. Concept maps help organize information and improve retention through collaborative visualization. Chatbots simulate patient interactions, allowing students to practice skills like history-taking. GIS enables visualization of disease patterns and geographical risk factors. These tools combine for "triad cycles": concept mapping, chatbot exploration, and GIS data anchoring, integrating into existing field visits without extra classes. Free resources like Cmap, sandboxed GPT chat, and QGIS keep costs low. Safeguards include data privacy, verifying chatbot outputs, and providing offline GIS guides. Assessment can include concept maps, chatbot reflections, and GIS storyboards. The goal is to modernize community medicine, transforming students into systems thinkers prepared for India's public health challenges.

Key Words: AI in Education, Educational Innovation, Gen-AI Learners, Medical Education

Generation-Z medical students are more inclined to interact with their phones through tapping, swiping, and speaking than to open physical books. They prefer visual content, immediate feedback, and learning experiences that are as dynamic as their social media feeds.[1] The traditional approach to community medicine, characterized by extensive lists and lengthy lectures, can seem sluggish to them. A straightforward set of three tools-concept maps, chatbots, and GIS-can make the subject more engaging, clearer, and more relevant to real life, while still aligning with India's new competency-based curriculum.

1. Concept maps: seeing the whole picture

Concept maps resemble spider-web diagrams that connect various ideas. According to a 2025 review of six studies, students who utilized these maps improved by one to two letter grades, primarily because they were able to organize information and retain it for longer periods.[2] In a community medicine class, a group might begin with 'maternal anaemia' at the center and then expand to include causes, risk factors, services, and policies. Since everyone contributes to the same map online, learning becomes a collaborative puzzle rather than solitary notetaking.

2. Chatbots: practice talks anytime

Chatbots powered by large language models (LLMs) are now capable of acting as patients, mentors, or even policymakers. When a team redesigned a teaching application using ChatGPT, 75% of students reported that their skills in taking patient histories improved, and they encountered a wider range of 'patients' compared to just participating in ward rounds.[3] During community placements, students have the opportunity to interact with a virtual TB patient or a pregnant migrant worker and then incorporate their insights into a concept map. This approach keeps the map dynamic and connects narratives to factual information.

3. GIS: putting data on the map

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have evolved from being confined to desktop software to becoming available through free, online dashboards. Indian educators who incorporate GIS into their teaching report that using local maps to visualize disease patterns enhances students' epidemiology skills and motivates them to undertake service projects that meet real community needs.[4] By mapping survey data such as the locations of latrines, water pumps, or tuberculosis cases students learn how geographical factors affect risk. This data is transformed into visual colours they can recognize, rather than just numbers in a spreadsheet.

4. How the three tools work together

1. **Start:** Draw a concept map of the health issue.
2. **Explore:** Use a chatbot to interview simulated patients or peers and spot missing links.
3. **Anchor:** Plot real or class-made data in GIS to test the map against real geography.

Weekly "triad cycles" can be integrated into current

family-adoption or field-visit schedules, eliminating the need for additional classes. Utilizing free resources like Cmap, sandboxed GPT chat, and QGIS keeps expenses nearly non-existent, and tech-savvy students are capable of managing most troubleshooting tasks.

5. Safeguards for teachers

New tech brings new duties. Faculty should:

- *Check privacy:* Use only de-identified or synthetic data in chatbot cases.
- *Verify answers:* Ask students to cross-check chatbot outputs with standard textbooks.
- *Mind bandwidth:* Provide offline GIS guides for campuses with slow internet.
- *Slow the scroll:* Build reflection breaks so learning stays deep, not just fast.[1]

6. Smarter assessment

Highlighting key elements: evaluated versions of each concept map, brief reflections on chatbot interactions, and five-slide GIS storyboards can substitute for some viva questions. Over time, educators can assess whether projects become more precise and if students' local health plans show improvement.

7. Conclusion

Community Medicine serves as a bridge between healthcare facilities and the community, and the integration of concept maps, chatbots, and GIS technology modernizes this connection for the age of artificial intelligence. By assisting Gen-AI learners in linking concepts, engaging in safe discussions, and visualizing data on maps, we transform rote learners into systems thinkers equipped to address India's public health challenges in the coming decade. Our educational environments must evolve alongside our students and the communities they aim to support.

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