

Mark schemes

Q1.

[AO1 = 6 AO3 = 10]

| Level | Marks | Description |
|-------|-------|--|
| 4 | 13-16 | Knowledge of self-disclosure and the absence of gating in virtual relationships is accurate and generally well detailed. Discussion is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. |
| 3 | 9-12 | Knowledge of self-disclosure and the absence of gating in virtual relationships is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Discussion is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately. |
| 2 | 5-8 | Limited knowledge of self-disclosure and the absence of gating in virtual relationships is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions. OR one aspect at Level 3/4. |
| 1 | 1-4 | Knowledge of self-disclosure and the absence of gating in virtual relationships is very limited. Discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one aspect at Level 1/2. |
| | 0 | No relevant content. |

Possible content:

- self-disclosure in virtual relationships happens more quickly than in face-to-face interaction due to anonymity – strangers on a train effect (Rubin, 1975)
- increased self-disclosure (amount and type of content) means relationships become deeper/intimate more quickly – they are hyper-personal (Walther, 1996)
- hyper-personal model – individuals can engage in selective self-presentation – only show/reveal what they choose to reveal
- absence of gating refers to how virtual relationships are not affected by some of the usual barriers that constrain relationship formation in real-life encounters
- examples of factors that enable gating include distance, lack of physical attractiveness, social awkwardness.

Possible discussion:

- use of evidence in relation to self-disclosure/effects of absence of gating
- interaction between absence of gating and self-disclosure, eg socially awkward individuals have a stronger need to disclose because they cannot normally do so; absence of gating shifts focus from how people look/behave to what they say (disclose)
- discussion in relation to reduced cues theory (Sproull and Kiesler, 1986) – more intimate/increased self-disclosure in a virtual setting because de-individuation/anonymity leads to disinhibition
- discussion of the possible negative effects of increased self-disclosure, eg too much, too early can be off-putting
- negative effect of absence of gating – makes it easier for individuals to be dishonest/misrepresent themselves in online interactions
- mediating effects of type of virtual interaction, eg chat-room content of disclosures differs from that on computer dating sites because one would never lead to face-to-face interaction whereas the other probably will.

Credit other relevant material.

[16]