LEARNING THAT LASTS

Megan Hodgson and Mohammed Yafai, Education Leads at **Project Yalla Learn** explain why your child forgets what they learn at school and how you can help them remember.

Megan and Mohammed: Helping students not just with their short-term memory, but with their long-term learning.

PICTURE this. Your child bursts through the door after school, brimming with excitement. They have just had a fantastic science lesson exploring forces, or perhaps they've delved into a gripping scene in *Macbeth*.

At the dinner table, they explain it confidently and answer every question. You feel proud and reassured that they have learnt these topics well.

Fast forward a few weeks. The end-of-unit test arrives, and the results surprise you. Information that once seemed so secure is now difficult to recall, and your child might even say: "I don't remember learning that." Sound familiar?

PERFORMANCE VS LEARNING

This is where it helps to know the difference between **performance** and **learning**.

• **Performance** is what your child can do right now, immediately after learning.

• **Learning** is what they can still do later, after time has passed and forgetting has had a chance to set in. True learning is a change in long-term memory.

HOW THE BRAIN STORES AND LOSES INFORMATION

To understand why forgetting happens, it helps to know a little about how memory works.

Your child's **working memory** is where thinking happens and new information is first held, but it's limited and can only handle a few items at once.

For learning to last, that new information must be processed and stored in **long-term memory**, which is vast and effectively unlimited. Recall brings it back into working memory, but if the connection isn't strong, retrieval is hard and learning feels lost.

WHY DO CHILDREN (AND ADULTS!) FORGET?

Research shows much new information is forgotten within days. Early theorists blamed the passing of time, while later research points to interference - the way new learning connects, or fails to connect, to prior knowledge.

Linked ideas are remembered more easily, disconnected ones fade faster. Whatever the cause, if your child doesn't revisit new learning, it will fade.

HOW WE CAN HELP

At Project Yalla Learn, our tutors specialise in turning short-term performance into long-term mastery. Our experienced, UK-qualified teachers, many of whom hold leadership roles in teaching and learning and curriculum design, offer online one-to-one and group tutoring for Primary, Secondary, and A-Level students.

We know that real learning lasts long after the lesson ends, and our approach draws on a wide range of evidence from cognitive science. To help our students retain knowledge long-term, we prioritise these three proven strategies in our tutoring sessions:

1. **Retrieval Practice**: regularly recalling information to strengthen memory, for example through quizzes or low-stakes tests.
2. **Spaced Practice**: revisiting a topic over time, rather than cramming in one go, to improve retention.
3. **Interleaving**: mixing different topics or problem types to encourage deeper thinking and build flexible understanding.

When revising independently, students often start with familiar strategies like re-reading notes or highlighting pages. While these can feel helpful at first, we encourage our tutees to move beyond them and adopt proven tools and techniques such as knowledge organisers, flashcards, and self-quizzing - methods that promote active engagement and help learning stick.

Our name, Yalla – an Arabic expression meaning "come on" or "let's go"- captures our promise to walk alongside your child, encouraging them every step and inspiring a genuine love of learning.

So, Yalla - here's to evidence-informed learning that lasts!

To hear more or book a free consultation, please visit projectyalla.com or email info@projectyalla.com.