The Causes Behind Cheating

Cheating is ridiculously easy, especially with all the technology at hand, and around 95% of kids admitted to cheating at some point in their lives. There is a plethora of influences that encourage cheating; rapidly increasing social pressures, the lack of passion for a subject, the advantages of academic dishonesty, and even the way school is structured. All these lead to students believing the benefits of cheating outweigh the potential risk of getting caught.

The way school is structured encourages cheating. Students spend a lot of time doing work that seems like useless information. They don't care about the information they care about the grades because grades are used as the only motivator. Getting from school year to school year depends on grades after all. So because of this mentality and the fact the grades are used as the sole motivator they'll do anything to get good grades, this includes cheating. Even at an early age students begin to realize that they don't need to remember the information for long, only after the test is finished. All they need to do is provide the correct answers in class. And correct isn't what they think is correct it's whatever the teacher/test producer thinks is correct. A high school student once summed this up perfectly, "I don't need or want to know why it works this way, only that I know how to get the correct answer."

Even when students are passionate about a school subject they tend to cheat in it, this is because with all the other work they have to don't have time to truly dive deep into learning that subject. Take science, for example, a student who loves science but isn't that into learning about history can't really dive deep into learning science because they don't have time to learn more than what the school tells them to learn. If they do try to learn more science and actually engage in learning more their other grades drop. Also, many students believe to get into top schools they need to take several extracurricular activities to appear "well rounded" because that's what colleges are looking for. To do well and achieve high grades students need to learn the bare minimum that schools teach them. If they try to do anything else it's a waste of time, all the best-performing students learned that.

Also often the rules of cheating have very little to do with actually learning. For example, if you create a sheet with a summary of all the things you learned for the test and review it right before the test that isn't cheating, however, if you do during the test it is. This leads to students committing it to short term memory then forgetting it soon after the test. If you copy a paper or just write a paper close enough to a source then you've cheated, however, if you write a paper but paraphrase enough then you haven't. Now you can draw a lot of parallels between school and a game, especially the rules of both. The only difference between them is school is a game that you are forced to play, and if you were forced to play a game and found an exploit that let you finish the game faster and better, would you use the exploit.