ASCD Learning Styles Article Response

In this particular article, the teachers of Lowman Elementary School decided to take their students’ various learning styles a step further, paving the way for future educational success. This article is based around a classroom that changed its entire look in order to create a space that could enhance and reinforce a student’s learning style, to give that student an environment that would allow him or her to do their best work. There are individual desk lamps, room dividers, milk crates, beanbag chairs, a couch, and tables. Students who work best with bright light are encouraged to sit near the desk lamps, as opposed to the students who sit near windows because they prefer natural light. This also works with temperature and the fireplace or wearing sweaters; as well as, the ability to use headphones to listen to wordless music or earplugs to block out noise. The students are allowed to design their own workspace. The most noticeable changes are that students are less distracted, complete their work on time, disrupt the class less, and earn higher grades (students have had, on average, a gain of 1.4 years on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills).

I have never thought to completely change the environment, or to incorporate so many variations of environments in one classroom before. I like how each student plays a part in creating his or her study area, as long as that is where they are able to do their best work. I agree with that goal, more than following a certain learning style in order to gain better grades or get more work done; although, these results do seem to come right along with this procedure, which is outstanding to note. What was most impressive to me was not only the teachers insane creativity and flexibility, but the reactions of the students to this system. Students began requesting to incorporate their learning styles into their work because they saw how helpful their new and personalized environments were. The students also care more about their learning and the environment in which they work, which can be hard to instill in students, especially if you are the one that put all of the work into setting up your classroom or dictating their learning.