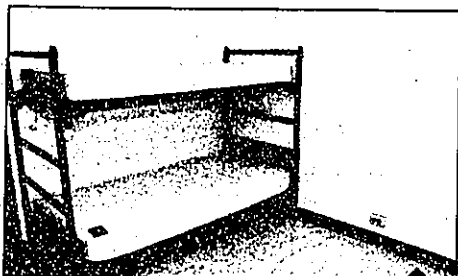


COVER STORY



BEFORE



AFTER

Color coordinated: Designer Jodi Anger created this functional but stylish room at Eastern Michigan University. The comforters are in Eastern's colors. The futon has a handy storage drawer. Individual lights allow students to read without bothering a roommate.

Students make a space of their own

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
STAFF WRITER

Brian Ruppert has done the circuit of campus housing.

The fifth year University of Michigan civil engineering student spent his freshman year crammed into a "converted triple," three students in a room built for two. He also spent three years living off campus in houses and apartments, where he had to cook his own meals.

This year the Clarkston High School graduate is a resident staff assistant and has a room of his own at Lewis House at Bursley Hall.

"I started thinking of a design and I thought about it for a couple weeks," Ruppert said. "I wanted a gathering space, because I'm the resident staff. I wanted someplace that was comfortable to meet."

Ruppert's solution was a loft that allowed him to divide and conquer his decorating problem.

"Basically I divided my room into three parts," Ruppert said. "The first is an entry area for administrative stuff, a mirror, reception area and desk. The second space is more intimate, for sitting and talking, with the room cut in half by a loft, which gives a lower ceiling. On top of the loft is the bed and a drafting table."

Every year thousands of college students are faced with the problem of making a comfortable home away from home. They often have limited budgets, limited space in dorm rooms or shared houses and limited privacy. Most also have to learn the fine art of compromise in dealing with roommates and house rules.

Kmart Corp., recognizing the budget problems faced by students, hired a design consultant to decorate a dorm room at Eastern Michigan.

ing on a dorm room project, we went to Eastern because we already had a relationship with the university through NICE (National Institute for Consumer Education) at Eastern," said Kmart spokeswoman Laura Mahle.

Kmart hired Jodi Anger, a 24-year-old Eastern graduate to do the decorating in a standard 12-by-18-foot two-person dorm room.

Anger said the biggest problems were the tight space and the strict dorm codes. She said the codes prohibit removing window treatments and wall painting. She said that using prints and coverups solve the code problem and creative storage makes better use of space.

Storage is a major problem for students who bring their clothes, books and other objects from home.

"You have a lot of great storage units available," Anger said. "We put them under the bed and around the room. We had a futon with a big drawer under it and used space saver units in the closet, under the bed and under the microwave."

Mahle said Rubberrmaid's Keeper boxes are great stackable storage units.

Mahle said lighting was used to create private sectors. Three-way lights can be dimmed for use by late night scholars while letting tired roommates sleep.

Anger said the most important thing about living with a roommate is communication.

"Some have hand-me-downs, objects that have been passed down from someone else. It's important to call before you move in, maybe going shopping together or waiting until

Here are some tips from Kmart design consultant Jodi Anger on how to decorate a college dorm room economically:

- Purchase space-saving containers to conveniently store your most prized possessions.
- Invest in a Multi-Use Cart with storage bins. Anger selected one equipped with wheels so that it could easily be moved around the room. She placed a microwave on top of the cart and stored food and supplies in the bins.
- Coordinate a student's work area with a desk organizer lamp that has compartments to hold desk supplies like pencils, pens and post-it notes.
- Consider a futon which serves as a couch by day and bed by night.
- Use the colors in your comforter as a starting point to color coordinate your room.
- A dome-touch lamp with a three-way lighting feature sheds just the right amount of light especially when one student burns the midnight oil while roomies sleep.
- Translition a dorm room decoratively with area rugs.
- Change the curtains supplied by the housing office, but be careful not to break housing codes.
- When it comes to appliances, pool your resources. If you don't continue to live with your roommate(s), buy the other partner(s) possession at the end of the year.

On the cover: Brian Ruppert takes the command position in his dormitory loft at the University of Michigan. Staff photo by Bill Bresler

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