The Design Notebook

An important part of Art, Science, Engineering, and especially Robotics is being able to keep track of what you did so that you can:

- share your work with other people,
- go back to work on problems that you couldn’t solve earlier, but that you’ve got the resources or abilities to do now,
- pick up where you left off after an interruption

A useful tool for this is a notebook, and is among the most valuable things you will take with you from this experience. It will be a record of your work, and will be something you refer back to often. The notebook should be personal - that is, it should reflect you: your tastes, your words, your thoughts. It will contain recipes for building things, ideas for things you’d like to build, feelings about your robots and this experience.

You should take time after every exploration to record notes about what you did. Use a combination of words, quick little drawings or sketches that you make; you can even include pictures and clippings printed out from the Web, books, magazines, etc. I favor using pencil and very few colors.

Try to address each of these after every class:

- the initial problem
- what you did to solve it
- what materials and other resources you used
- what might you change for next time?
- a recipe with enough detail so you could do it again

Here’s an example of mine: