

The Part-Pano Move

Announcement of Discovery for a New Cognitive Move in Systems Thinking

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ABSTRACT: Discovering a new cognitive Move in systems thinking is akin to discovering a new axiom in geometry or a new prime in number theory: it reveals a universal, reusable structure of thought that is independent of content and immediately useful across domains. The Part-Pano Move, proposed by Kevin A. Brown, is such a discovery—the 189th Move identified in the canon. It extends the familiar vertical logic of Zoom In and Zoom Out into a lateral, panoramic direction. The Part-Pano Move begins with an identity that is also a whole (i.e., it has internal parts), and then structurally situates that whole as a part in multiple lateral systems simultaneously—a “panorama” of wholes. This lateral nesting reveals diverse meanings and roles across systems, enhancing systems literacy, perspective-taking, and problem-solving. This paper introduces the Part-Pano Move, clarifies its structural composition, and outlines its cognitive and practical significance.

KEYWORDS: systems thinking | cognitive moves | discovery | cognitive universals | cognitive tools | part-pano move

Background: DSRP and the Lens Metaphor

DSRP theory (Distinctions, Systems, Relationships, Perspectives) posits that all cognition is structured by four universal patterns. It offers tools for cognitive structuring, including two widely used “zoom” moves:

- Zoom In: decomposing a whole into parts.
- Zoom Out: placing a whole into a larger whole.

These vertical moves reflect hierarchical logic and help thinkers navigate part-whole relations along a vertical axis of nested systems.

Discovery of the Lateral Part-Pano Move

The Part-Pano Move fills a missing lateral dimension. It begins with an identity that is also a whole (i.e., a system of parts), and intentionally situates that whole as a part in multiple, lateral, systems—each of

which themselves are hierarchically nested—thus the initial identity becomes a part in a panorama of wholes.

Definition: The Part-Pano Move is the intentional act of taking an identity that is a whole and situating it as a part in multiple lateral systems, often occupying a different structural or functional role in each.

This move uses the metaphor of a panoramic camera lens, expanding our frame of view to reveal structural complexity not through hierarchy but through contextual multiplicity.

Structural Mechanics of the Part-Pano Move

The Part-Pano Move is atomic, formally rooted in a single DSRP pattern: Systems (S). However, it begins with a unit that is both a Distinction (D) and a System (S) (i.e., a whole with parts), and places that unit as a part in multiple other Systems.

- Distinction (D): The identity of the whole shifts across lateral systems.
- System (S): The same whole becomes a part in several systems.
- Relationship (R): Each system introduces new relational patterns and dynamics.
- Perspective (P): Each system reflects a different observer stance or stakeholder view.

The move activates all four patterns in practice, giving it molecular-level power. Brown assigns an Information Agnosticism Ratio (IAR) of 1.00, meaning the move's structure is entirely independent of any specific content. Its utility is in its form, not its subject. The Explicit DSRP Number (or Atomic No.) is 2/4 because its mapping explicitly differentiates identities and part-whole systems (S) but does not explicitly require relationships (R) or perspectives (P). It is the 189th move discovered.

Moves Library Entry for Part-Pano Move

Unique ID: 189-2S-11

Move Name: Part-Pano

Belongs to Set: Second Set

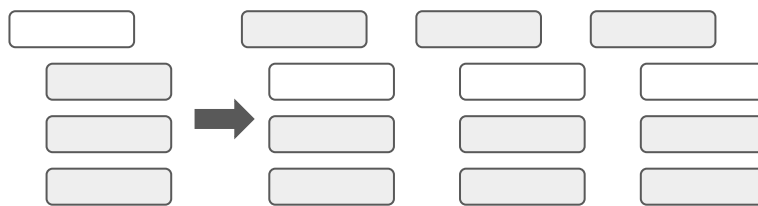
Explicit DSRP No. (Atomic No.): 2/4

Explicit Patterns: System (S), Distinction (D)

Information Agnosticism Ratio (IAR) I/O: 1.00

Required Informational Content: None

Description: The Part-Pano Move begins with an identity that is also a whole and situates it as a part in multiple lateral wholes (systems)—each assigning different meaning, relationships, and perspectives.

Map:

Articles/Resources: Brown KA. The part-pano move: Announcement of discovery for a new cognitive move in systems thinking. *J Syst Think*. 2025;5(1):1-6. doi:10.54120/jost.2025.000008

Discovered by: Kevin Brown

History of Move (if available): Discovered July 26, 2025 by Kevin Brown. Approved by STSI Science Board's New Moves Committee August 19, 2025.

Special Uses: Seeing that any identity or whole system can be part of many systems simultaneously; recognizing that from the perspective of those different systems the identity could be viewed in a subtle or radically different way; Enables contextual multiplicity; prevents reductionism; supports lateral thinking in cross-domain problem solving.

Move Combines Some of: Implied logic of Zoom In and Zoom Out and Perspective

Alternative names: Panoramic Part-to-whole Move; Pano

Related Moves: Zoom in and Zoom out

Variant Moves: N/A

Illustrative Examples

In each of the following cases, an identity-whole (e.g., school, river, freedom) is treated as a part in multiple lateral systems. The phrasing below makes the structure explicit:

A School

- Education System: A school is a part of an education system—a learning center with students and teachers.
- Economic System: A school is a part of an economic system—an employer and budget item.
- Political System: A school is a part of a political system—a site of policy and civic engagement.
- Cultural System: A school is a part of a cultural system—a symbol of community identity.

A River

- Environmental System: A river is a part of an environmental system—an ecosystem for plants, fish, and wildlife.
- Economic System: A river is a part of an economic system—a transportation route or energy source.

- Political System: A river is a part of a political system—a resource under regulation or a national border.
- Cultural System: A river is a part of a cultural system—a sacred site or symbol in local traditions.

Freedom

- Political System: Freedom is a part of a political system—associated with rights, laws, and democracy.
- Economic System: Freedom is a part of an economic system—linked to free markets, entrepreneurship, and consumer choice.
- Social System: Freedom is a part of a social system—reflected in expression, identity, and movement.
- Psychological System: Freedom is a part of a psychological system—experienced as autonomy or independent thought.

Cognitive Significance

The Part-Pano Move provides several core benefits:

- Context Expansion: Prevents reductive or single-system thinking.
- Perspective Clarification: Reveals why the same thing is seen differently by different people or disciplines.
- Boundary Spanning: Encourages cross-domain insight and interdisciplinary understanding.
- Structural Awareness: Highlights role changes and relational dynamics across systems.
- Systems Literacy: Strengthens metacognition by visualizing structure through form, not content.

Practice Guidelines

To apply the Part-Pano Move:

1. Select an Identity that is also a Whole (i.e., something that has internal structure or parts).
2. Identify lateral systems in which this whole could be nested as a part.
3. Analyze the role and relational network it holds in each system.
4. Contrast these structures to find variation, conflict, or synergy.
5. Visualize or map the results for comparative insight.

Significance of Move Discovery

The formal identification of a new Move in DSRP is more than a conceptual contribution—it is a structural innovation. Such discoveries are rare because they must meet rigorous criteria:

- Universality across domains and disciplines.
- Reusability due to structural (not semantic) definition.
- Explicit cognitive utility and frequency of implicit use.

Finding such a Move is comparable to discovering a new operator in logic or a base unit in physics: it reshapes the cognitive grammar available to thinkers. The Part-Pano Move makes visible a previously unnamed, but frequently used structure in human cognition.

Conclusion

The Part-Pano Move adds a critical lateral dimension to the DSRP toolkit. By placing identity-wholes into multiple co-existing systems, it reveals roles, meanings, and relationships that vertical hierarchy alone cannot. This structural insight improves systems thinking capacity, enhances empathy across perspectives, and elevates both analysis and creativity.

Recognition by the New Moves in Systems Thinking Committee

Following formal submission and review, the Part-Pano Move was unanimously approved by the *New Moves Committee of the STSI Science Board* as an official addition to the Table of Known Moves.

After deliberation on its structural validity, cognitive utility, and universality across domains, the committee voted to classify the Part-Pano Move as an Atomic Move rooted in the Systems (S) pattern, with emergent activation of other DSRP patterns. The committee also assigned it to the Second Set of moves indicating its importance for all users. It was commended for making explicit a lateral structure that has long been implicitly used in systems thinking practice.

The award was formally conferred on, and added to the Moves Library, on August 19, 2025, and includes the following certificate of recognition:



This recognition affirms the Part-Pano Move's status as a reusable cognitive structure and joins it with other formally recognized moves in the DSRP-based systems thinking canon.

References

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