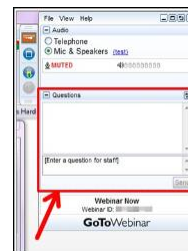




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**“Why am I muted?”**

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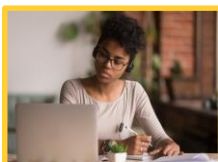


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# Mastering HPLC Method Development

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## Mastering HPLC Method Development: What are all those buttons for?



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President and Founder,  
Axion Analytical Labs, Inc. and the Axion Training Institute, Inc.



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Senior Portfolio Manager, ACS Learning and Career  
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## *HPLC: The World's Most Powerful Separation Tool*

- HPLC works by separating complex mixtures into pure compounds
- Why do we separate?
- We separate in order to:
  - Identify – What is present in the sample
  - Quantify – How much is present in the sample
  - Purify – Isolate a compound from the sample
- But step one is always to separate!
- Most people expect HPLC separations to be really complicated, but there are only 3 parameters that affect the separation!
- **And here's the best part:** YOU are in charge of those 3 parameters, so YOU are in charge of the separation.
- **So let's take a closer look** at these 3 parameters and how to set them properly.



**HPLC Master Resolution Equation**

$$R_s = \left( \frac{k}{1+k} \right) \times \left( \frac{\alpha - 1}{\alpha} \right) \times \frac{\sqrt{N}}{4}$$

Resolution	Capacity / Retention Factor	Selectivity	Efficiency ("Peak Skinniness")
R>1.50	1 < k < 5	α > 1.2	Avg ~ 10,000 Max ~ 30,000
Equation	$k = (t_r - t_0)/t_0$	$\alpha = k_B/k_A$	$N = 5.545 \times \left( \frac{t_r}{W_h} \right)^2$
How do you improve it?	Weaken the Mobile Phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase %H2O by 10%</li> <li>• Double the k!</li> </ul>	Function of the Mobile and Stationary Phase, pH, Temp, buffer, additive, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer Column</li> <li>• Smaller Particles</li> <li>• Optimize Flow Rate</li> <li>• Minimize Extra Column Volume</li> </ul>

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**Audience Survey Question**

ANSWER THE QUESTION ON BLUE SCREEN IN ONE MOMENT



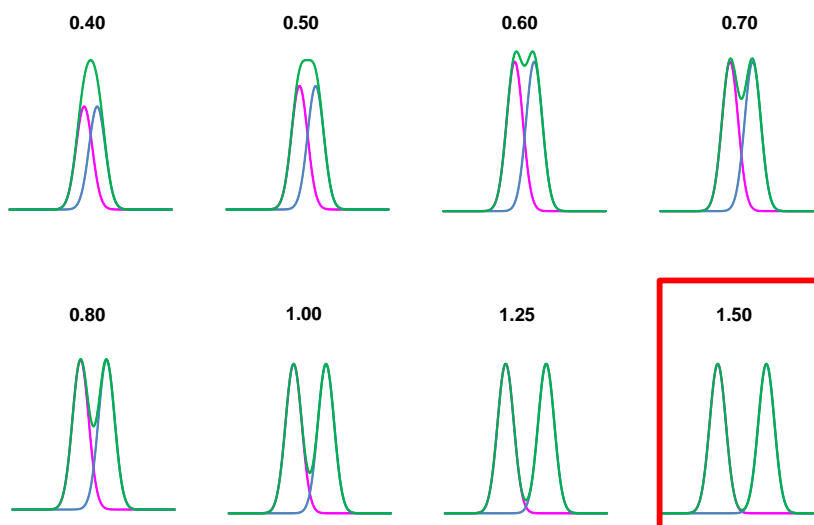
**The definition of good resolution should be greater than or equal to:**

- 0.50
- 0.70
- 1.00
- 1.50
- Any of these values



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## Different Resolution Values



Material Provided by  
Agilent Technologies

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## Method Development Step 1: Maximize Efficiency

$$R_s = \left( \frac{k}{1+k} \right) \cdot \left( \frac{\alpha-1}{\alpha} \right) \cdot \frac{\sqrt{N}}{4}$$

Capacity
Selectivity
Efficiency

- Start with the highest efficiency column that you can buy
- Try a 15 cm with 3.5  $\mu\text{m}$  particles (~20,000 plates) or
- 10 cm with 1.8  $\mu\text{m}$  particles (~28,000 plates) – Requires high pressure
- Note: During method optimization, we may opt for a shorter column
- Column length is proportional to the efficiency, but also to retention time

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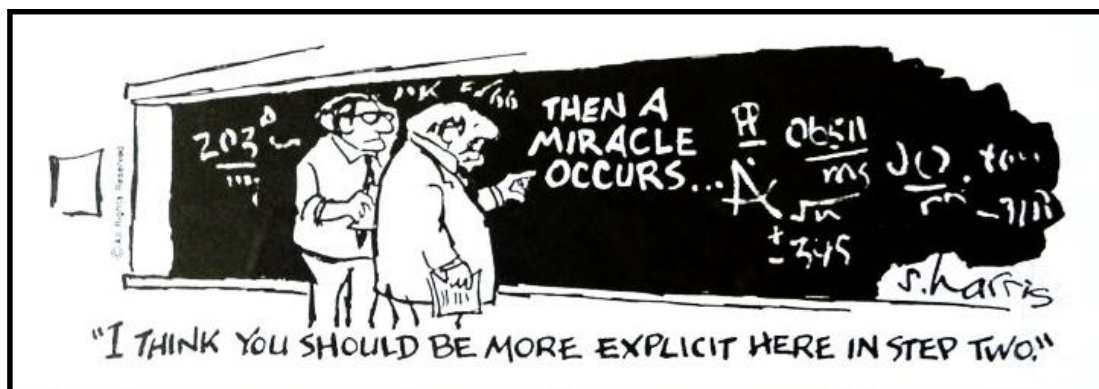
## Method Development Step 2: Find the Correct Selectivity

$$R_s = \left( \frac{k}{1+k} \right) \cdot \left( \frac{\alpha-1}{\alpha} \right) \cdot \frac{\sqrt{N}}{4}$$

Capacity
Selectivity
Efficiency

- Choose reversed phase because...
- Approximately 80% of all HPLC separations are carried out in the reversed phase mode!
- Acetonitrile or methanol blended with water on a good C18 column

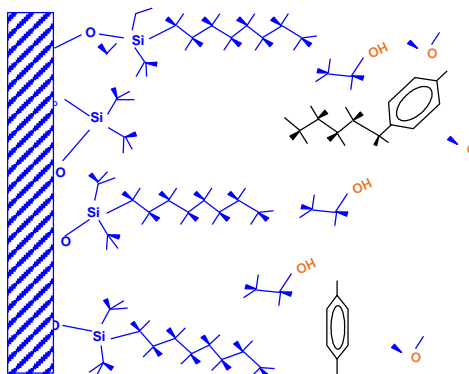
*Choose Reversed Phase Because... It Just seems to work for most applications!*



Great Science Cartoon courtesy of Sidney Harris

## *Reversed-Phase Mechanism*

- The analytes partition between the non-polar stationary phase and the polar mobile phase
- Relative affinity means there are two dimensions to the separation
- Reversed phase is especially sensitive to minor differences in hydrophobicity
- The addition or subtraction of just about any group leads to hydrophobicity changes: methyl, hydroxyl, amino, carbonyl, acid, etc.



## *When to Choose Reversed Phase*

- Neutral, polar and nonpolar compounds with a molecular weight less than ~2000
- Homologous series
- Organic acids and bases
- Proteins and peptides

### **More Challenging to do by reversed phase**

- Extremely polar compounds
- Extremely non-polar compounds

## Audience Survey Question

ANSWER THE QUESTION ON BLUE SCREEN IN ONE MOMENT



### Why do we usually choose reversed phase?

- The mechanism seems to work for most separations
- It allows us to analyze polar and non-polar compounds
- The solvents are less hazardous than normal phase
- To impress my friends at the next cocktail party!
- All of the above



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### Method Development Step 3: Optimize Capacity Factor

$$R_s = \left( \frac{k}{1+k} \right) \cdot \left( \frac{\alpha-1}{\alpha} \right) \cdot \frac{\sqrt{N}}{4}$$

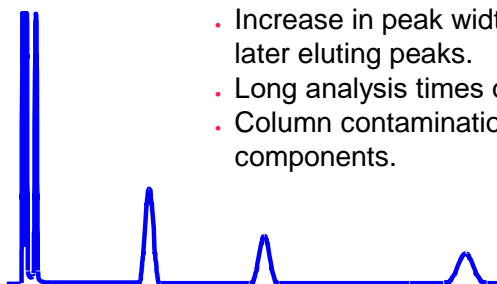
Capacity Factor
Selectivity
Efficiency

- How do you find the correct mobile phase strength?
- Try all of the strengths!... and see where your peaks elute.
- Scouting Run: Gradient from weakest to strongest mobile phase
- Listen to your sample! The peaks will elute at their desired %B
- There are 3 simple rules for finding the correct mobile phase...but first some definitions.

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## Isocratic Elution (Constant Solvent Composition)

Isocratic 50/50  
Water/Methanol



### Problems:

- Poor resolution of early eluting peaks.
- Increase in peak width and decrease in peak height for later eluting peaks.
- Long analysis times due to a wide range in  $k'$ .
- Column contamination with strongly retained components.

## Audience Survey Question

ANSWER THE QUESTION ON BLUE SCREEN IN ONE MOMENT



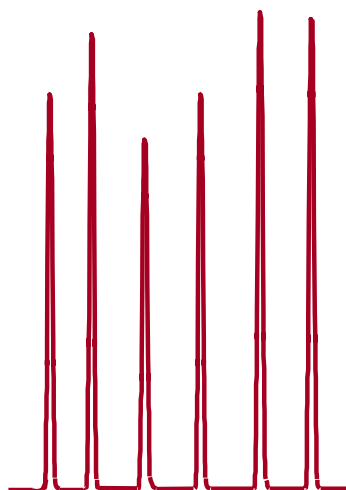
The first two peaks are coming off together near the void volume (low capacity factor). **What should we do to the mobile phase in order to improve the separation?**

- Make the mobile phase stronger
- Make the mobile phase weaker
- Slow down the flow rate
- Change the detector lamp



## Gradient Elution

Material Provided by  
Agilent Technologies



**Gradient from  
10-100% Methanol**

**Gradient Elution** - Mobile phase composition is changed (strengthened) during the separation.

### Advantages

- Improved *overall* resolution
- Increased detection
- Ability to separate complex samples
- Shorter analysis times
- Decrease in column deterioration due to strongly retained components

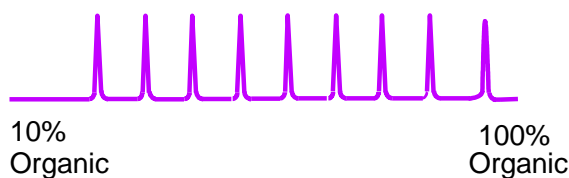
### Other Uses

- Column Cleaning
- Scouting run in method development

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## 3 Simple Gradient Rules



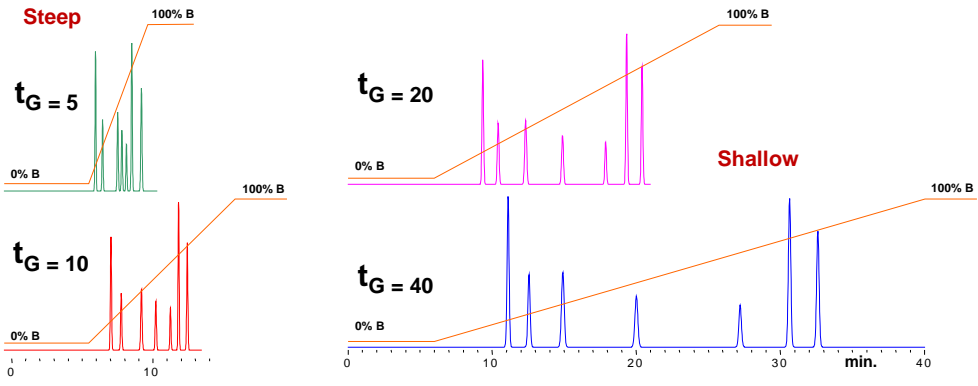
### 3 Important Rules for Setting Gradient Parameters

1. Initial Composition – Must be weak enough to give the first peak a  $k'$  of at least 1.0
2. Final Composition – Must be strong enough to elute the last peak from the column
3. Gradient Steepness – The longer the gradient, the higher the resolution, but it takes longer. Max 30 min.

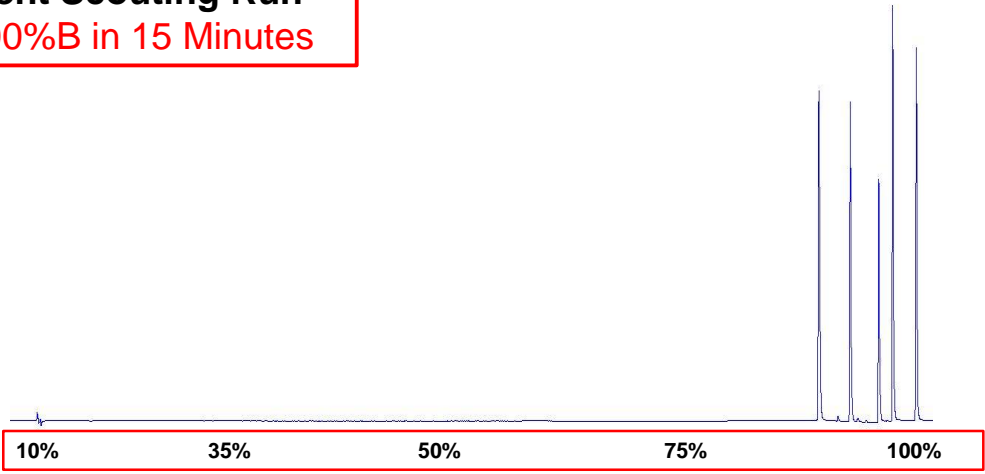
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# Select Gradient Steepness



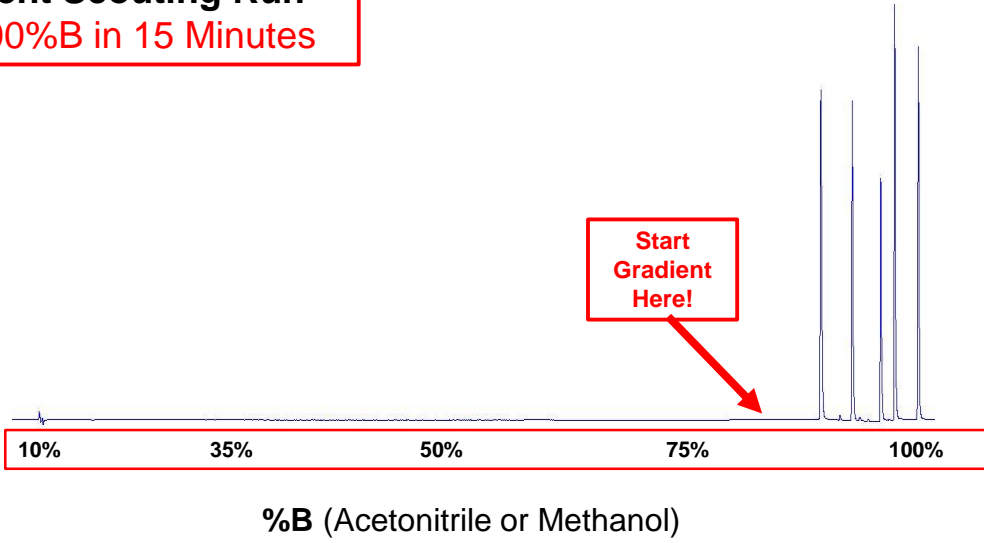
**Unknown Sample #1**  
**Gradient Scouting Run**  
10 - 100%B in 15 Minutes



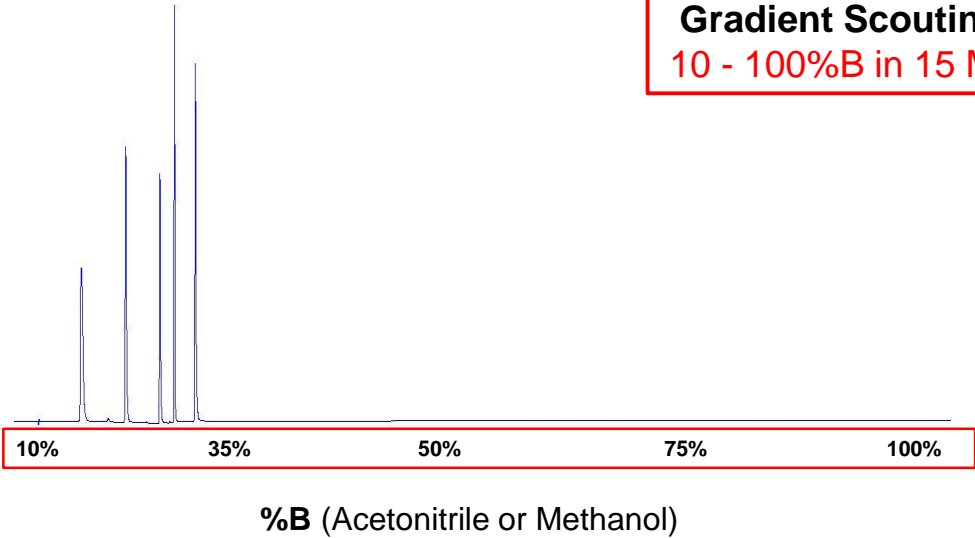
%B (Acetonitrile or Methanol)



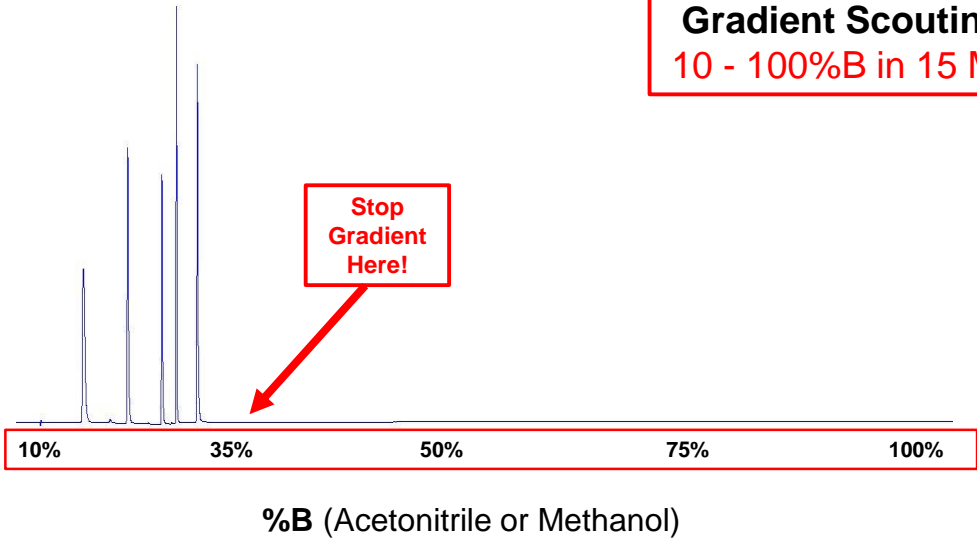
**Unknown Sample #1**  
**Gradient Scouting Run**  
10 - 100%B in 15 Minutes



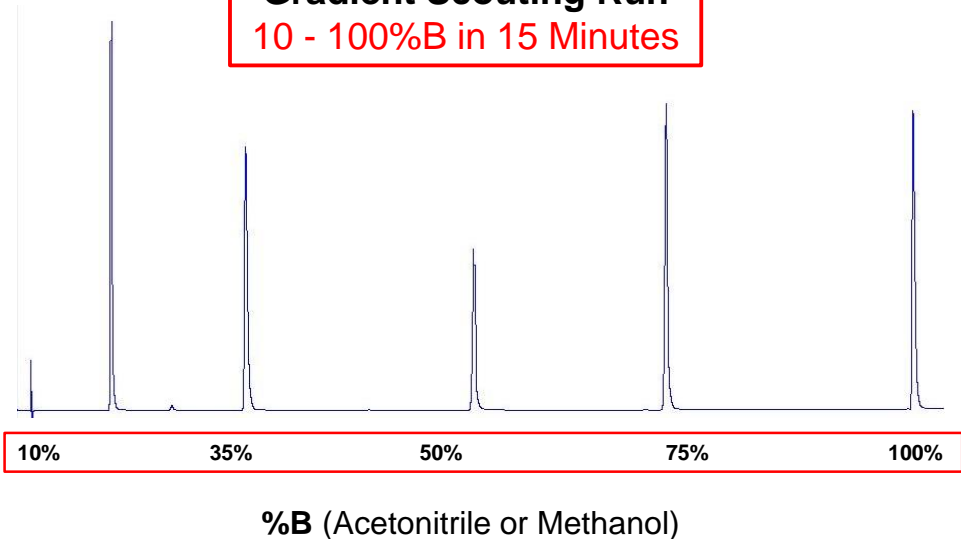
**Unknown Sample #2**  
**Gradient Scouting Run**  
10 - 100%B in 15 Minutes

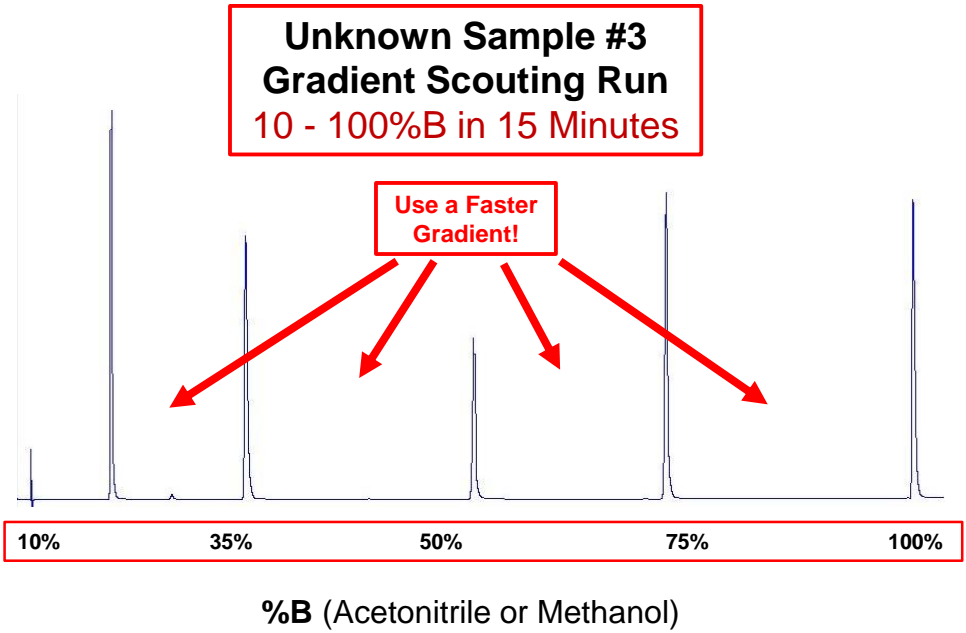


**Unknown Sample #2  
Gradient Scouting Run  
10 - 100%B in 15 Minutes**



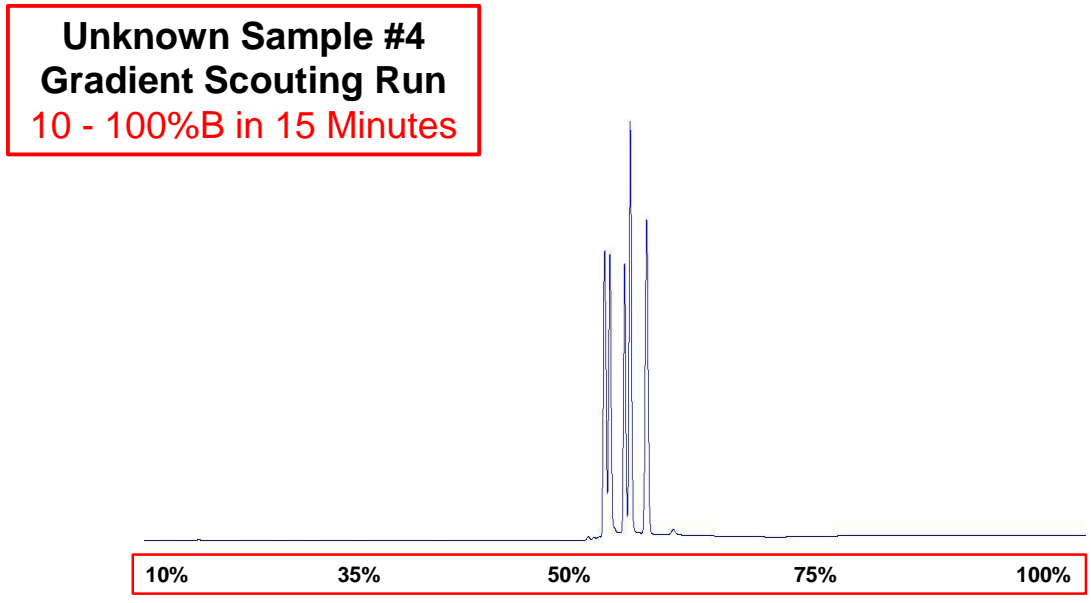
**Unknown Sample #3  
Gradient Scouting Run  
10 - 100%B in 15 Minutes**





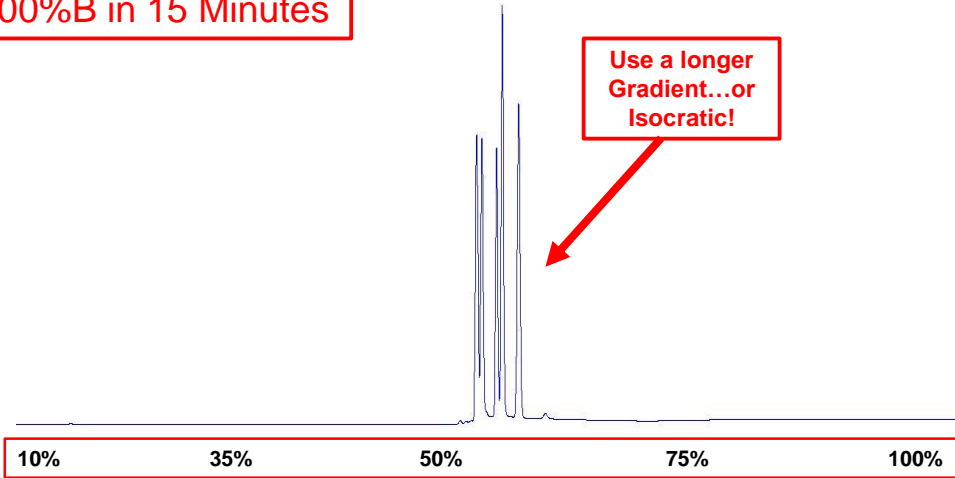
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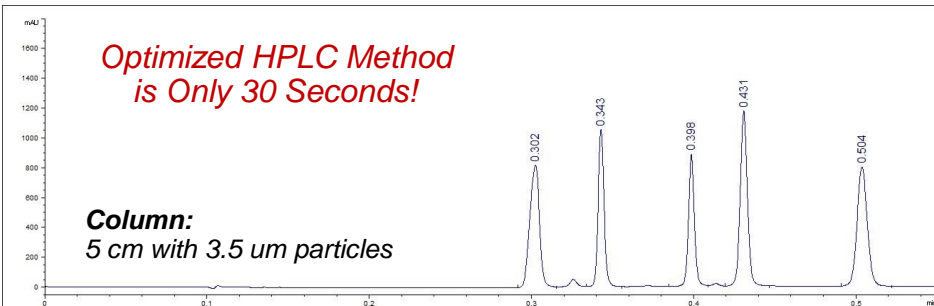
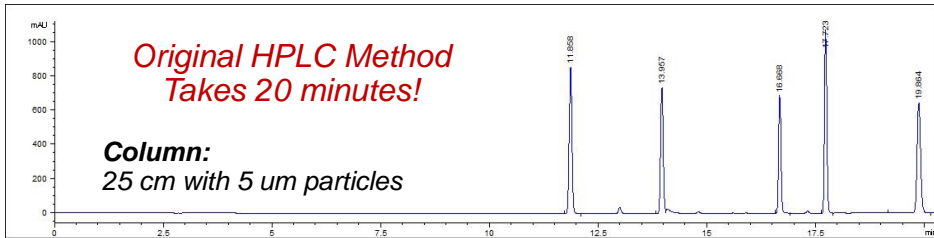
**Unknown Sample #4  
Gradient Scouting Run  
10 - 100%B in 15 Minutes**



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%B (Acetonitrile or Methanol)

*After Method Development, Use the Resolution Equation to Cut Analysis Time*



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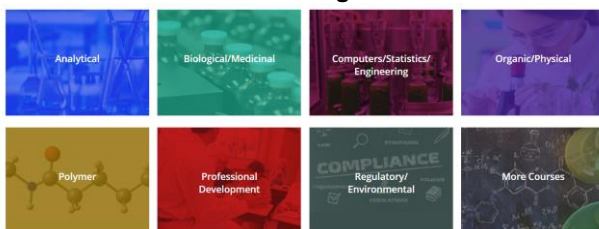
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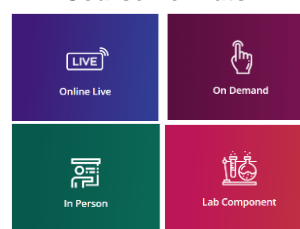
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What You Will Learn:

- How mechanically interlocked molecules (MIMs) are easily made and how they can be used in the construction of artificial molecular machines (AMMs)
- How AMMs operate under kinetic control using energy ratchets in a manner similar to that employed by our many biomotors and are at odds with how machines operate in the macroscopic world: the difference could not be more stark!

Co-produced with: ACS Committee on Science

## Chemistry on Capitol Hill

2021 Emerging Policies



Date: Wednesday, June 30, 2021 @ 2-3pm ET

Speakers: Caroline Trupp Gil, American Chemical Society / Karen Garcia, American Chemical Society / Carl Maxwell, American Chemical Society

Moderator: Lauren Posey, American Chemical Society

[Register for Free!](#)

What You Will Learn:

- How the Biden Administration and 117th Congress are shaping up in terms of its STEM priorities
- Which specific pieces of legislation or federal policies will be likely to impact ACS members
- How members can become involved

Co-produced with: ACS Government Affairs

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