

Getting Started with UltraPerformance Convergence Chromatography

**A Practitioner's Guide for Utilizing UPC² in
the Chromatographic Laboratory**

- What is UPC²?
- Getting Started
- Important Considerations for UPC²
- UPC² as a Replacement for NPLC
- Summary

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Convergence Chromatography is a category of separation science that provides orthogonal and increased separation power, compared to liquid or gas chromatography, to solve separation challenges.

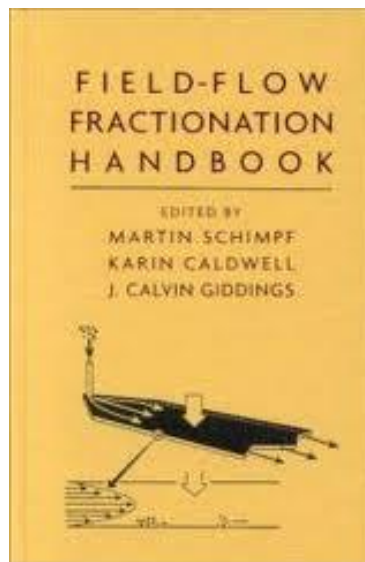
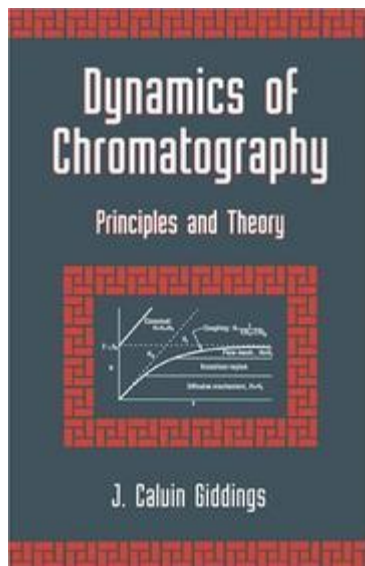
UltraPerformance Convergence Chromatography [UPC²] is a holistically designed chromatographic system that utilizes liquid CO₂ as a mobile phase to leverage the chromatographic principles and selectivity of normal phase chromatography while providing the ease-of-use of reversed-phase LC.

The **ACQUITY UPC² System** is built utilizing proven UPLC® technology to enable scientists the ability to address routine and complex separation challenges while delivering reliability, robustness, sensitivity and throughput never before possible for this analytical technique.

Why is it Called Convergence Chromatography?

Giddings, J.C. (1965) *A critical evaluation of the theory of gas chromatography*. In *Gas Chromatography*. 1964, edited by A. Goldup, p. 3-24. Elsevier, Amsterdam

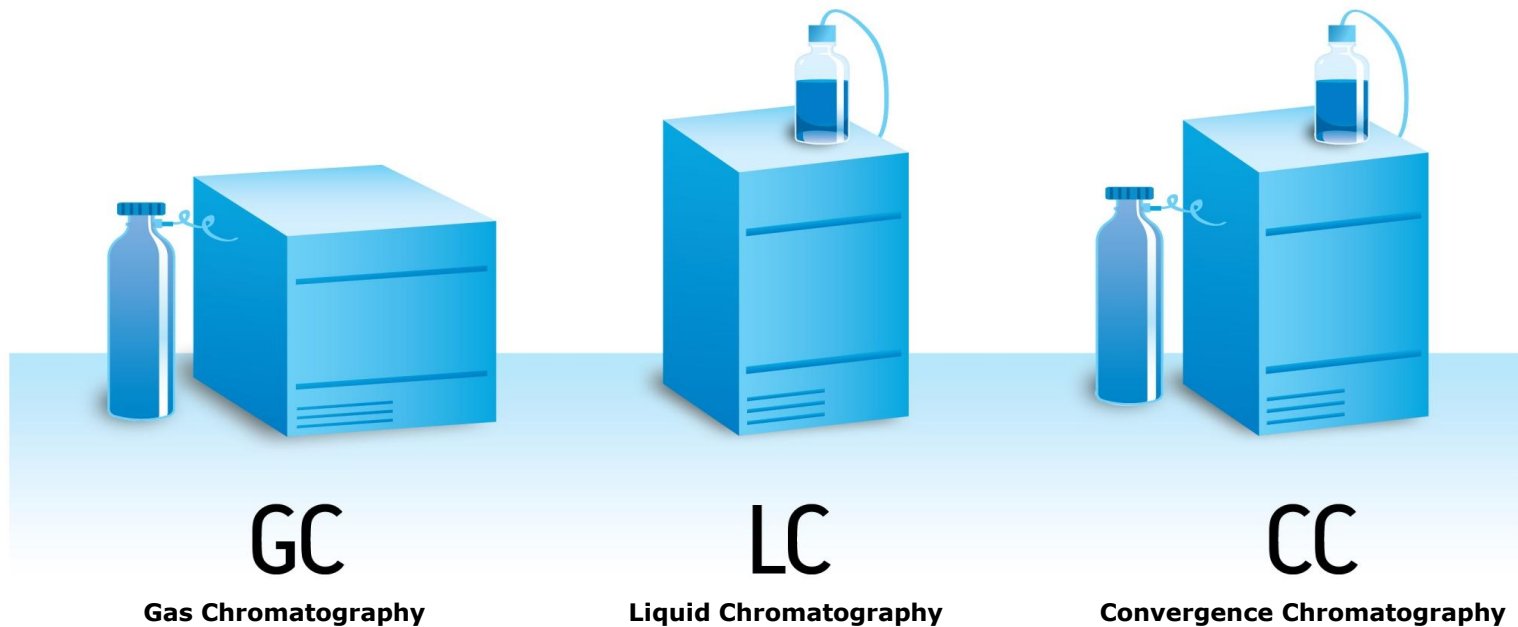
In this article Dr. Giddings stated “*One of the most interesting features of ultra high pressure gas chromatography would be **convergence** with classical liquid chromatography.*”



Prof. Calvin Giddings (1930-1996)

How Did Convergence Chromatography Evolve?

Waters
THE SCIENCE OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE.™



How Does Convergence Chromatography Work?

- UPC² is a chromatographic technique similar to HPLC
 - Instead of mobile phase A being aqueous, it is CO₂
- Mobile phases include a supercritical fluid & one (or more) co-solvents
 - CO₂ is the most common supercritical fluid (LC: weak solvent – MP A)
 - Methanol is the most common co-solvent (LC: strong solvent – MP B)

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 - CO₂ is the most common supercritical fluid (LC: weak solvent – MP A)
 - Methanol is the most common co-solvent (LC: strong solvent – MP B)
- As in LC, additives can be used to improve peak shape and/or manipulate selectivity
 - Common additives: ammonium hydroxide, formic acid, etc.
- UPC² provides normal-phase-like selectivities
- UPC² is compatible with most popular detection techniques
 - PDA, ELSD, MS, etc.

- What is UPC²?
- **Getting Started**
 - **Understanding the Terminology**
 - **Can My Samples be Analyzed by UPC²?**
 - **ACQUITY UPC² Columns**
 - **A Screening Protocol**
- Important Considerations for UPC²
- UPC² as a Replacement for NPLC
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- Conventional SFC terms such as *solvent*, *co-solvent* and *modifier* ALL refer to the primary liquid component(s) of mobile phase B
 - This *co-solvent* (mobile phase B) is the strong eluting solvent in UPC²
 - It is typically methanol but can also be other organic solvents such ethanol, 2-propanol, acetonitrile, etc. (or combinations)

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 - This *co-solvent* (mobile phase B) is the strong eluting solvent in UPC²
 - It is typically methanol but can also be other organic solvents such ethanol, 2-propanol, acetone, etc. (or combinations)
- An *additive* is a salt or liquid added to the *co-solvent* at a low concentration in order to improve peak shape(s) or analyte solubility and may influence selectivity
 - Examples of typical additives include diethyl amine, ammonium hydroxide, formic acid, trifluoroacetic acid, water, etc.
 - Typical additive concentrations are $\leq 2\%$ or 10 mM

Can My Sample Be Analyzed by UPC²?

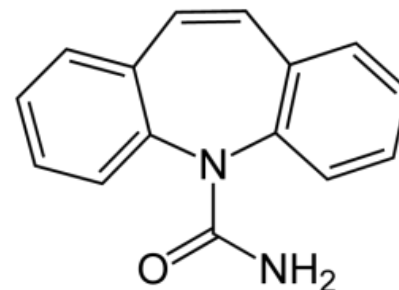
- As with any analytical technique, the more you know about your analyte(s) and sample(s), *the better*
 - What is the solubility of your analyte/sample in various organic solvents (often referred to as Log P)?
 - What is its partition coefficient, P (ratio of concentrations of an analyte in a mixture of two immiscible solvents: typically 1-octanol/water)?

Can My Sample Be Analyzed by UPC²?

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 - What is the solubility of your analyte/sample in various organic solvents (often referred to as Log P)?
 - What is its partition coefficient, P (ratio of concentrations of an analyte in a mixture of two immiscible solvents: typically 1-octanol/water)?
- Basically, ANY compound soluble in an organic solvent is a candidate for UPC²
 - Many sample preparation techniques produce samples dissolved in an organic solvent (*e.g.*, liquid/liquid extraction, solid phase extraction, protein precipitation, etc.) which **can be injected directly**

Can My Sample Be Analyzed by UPC²?

- Gather all the information that you can about your target analyte(s)
 - Molecular weight
 - Chemical structure
 - Molecular species (neutral, acid, base)
 - pKa (weak or strong)
 - Log P (for solubility)
 - UV absorbance (for choosing additives)
- Consult literature such as Merck Index, ChemBank, ChEMBL database, Beilstein, Gmelin, peer-reviewed journals, *etc.*



Carbamazepine

Solubility: 2-propanol (1.0 mg/mL),
insoluble in water

Species: Neutral

pKa: (weak acid) 13.94

Log P: 1.875

References: Merck Index, ChemBank, ChEMBL database

- Understanding analyte solubility is important in UPC²
- The 1-octanol/water partition coefficient (P) is a common measure of analyte solubility and is often readily available

$$\text{Partition Coefficient (P)} = \frac{[\textit{Analyte}]_{\text{Organic}}}{[\textit{Analyte}]_{\text{Aqueous}}}$$

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$$\text{Partition Coefficient (P)} = \frac{[\textit{Analyte}]_{\text{Organic}}}{[\textit{Analyte}]_{\text{Aqueous}}}$$

- $\text{Log P} = \log_{10} \text{Partition Coefficient (P)}$
 - **Log P = -2** means 1:100 Organic:Aqueous (100X more soluble in aqueous)
 - **Log P = 9** means 10⁹:1 Organic:Aqueous (10⁹X more soluble in organic)

Rule of Thumb:
Log P between -2 and 9 means analyte is a potential candidate for UPC²

UPC² Columns Used for Achiral Applications

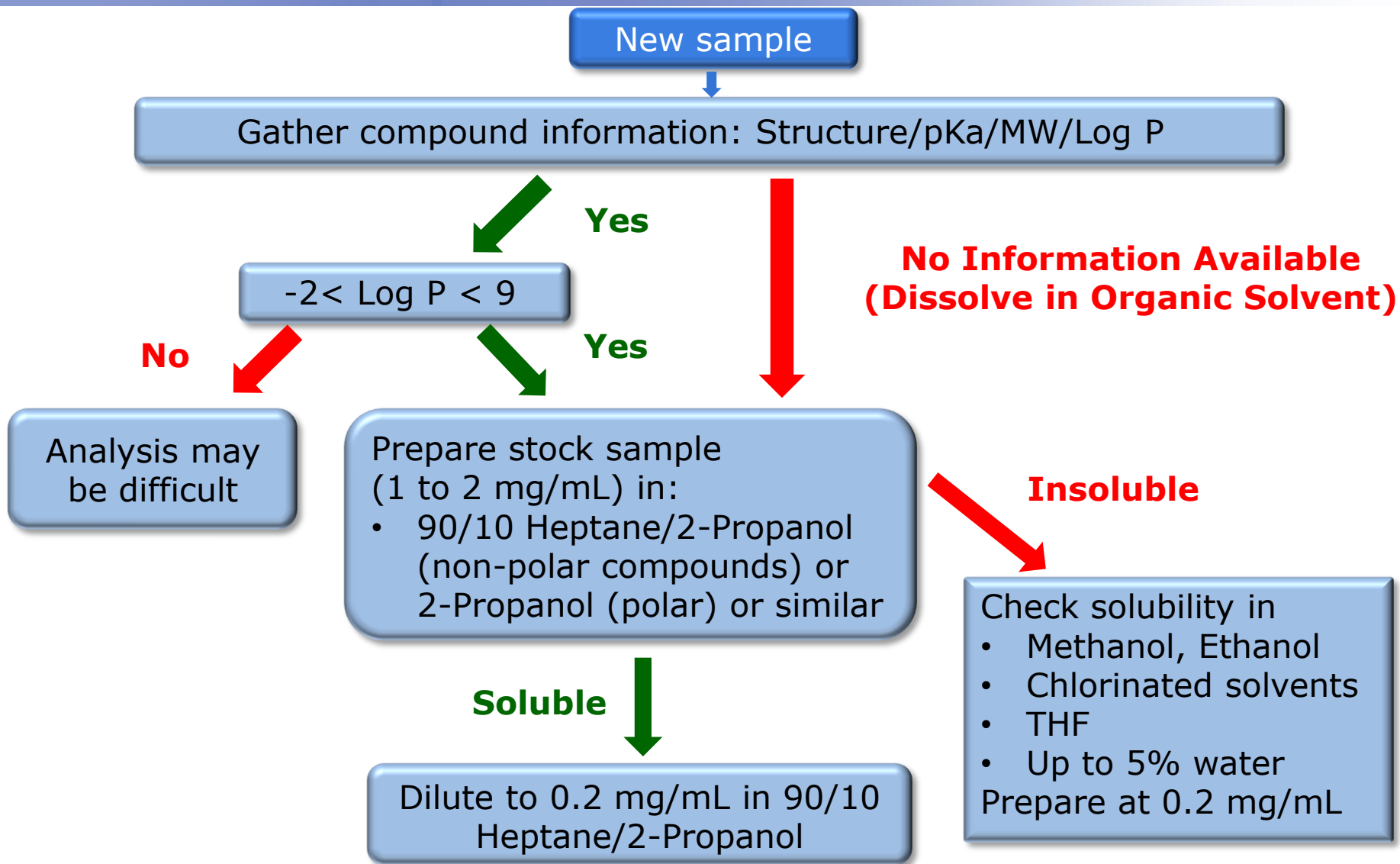
UPC ² Column Chemistry	Applications Examples
UPC ² BEH	OLEDs, polymer additives, pesticides, lipids
UPC ² BEH 2-EP	Steroids, pesticides
UPC ² CSH Fluoro-Phenyl	Vitamin D metabolites, steroids, natural products
UPC ² HSS C18 SB	Fat-soluble vitamins, lipids (free fatty acids)



Getting Started: ACQUITY UPC² Columns and Equilibration

- ACQUITY UPC² columns are shipped dry and require at least one hour or 100 column volumes under initial conditions to equilibrate
- When using additives such (*e.g.*, ammonium hydroxide) equilibration times may be longer
- Failing to properly equilibrate a UPC² column upon installation can result in irreproducible retention times

Getting Started: A Recommended Screening Protocol



Getting Started: Initial Screening Conditions

UPC² Screening Columns: BEH and BEH 2-EP

2nd Options: CSH Fluoro-Phenyl & HSS C18 SB

Starting
Conditions

Gradient: 2 to 40% Methanol in 5.0 min

Column(s): 3.0 x 100 mm, 1.7 μm

Flow rate: 2.0 mL/min

Column Temp: 35°C - 50°C

ABPR: 2000 psi (140 bar)

Wavelength: 220 nm (compensated 350-450 nm)

Weak Needle Wash: Methanol/2-Propanol (1:1)

Strong Needle Wash: Methanol

Seal Wash: Methanol

Co-Solvents

B1: Methanol

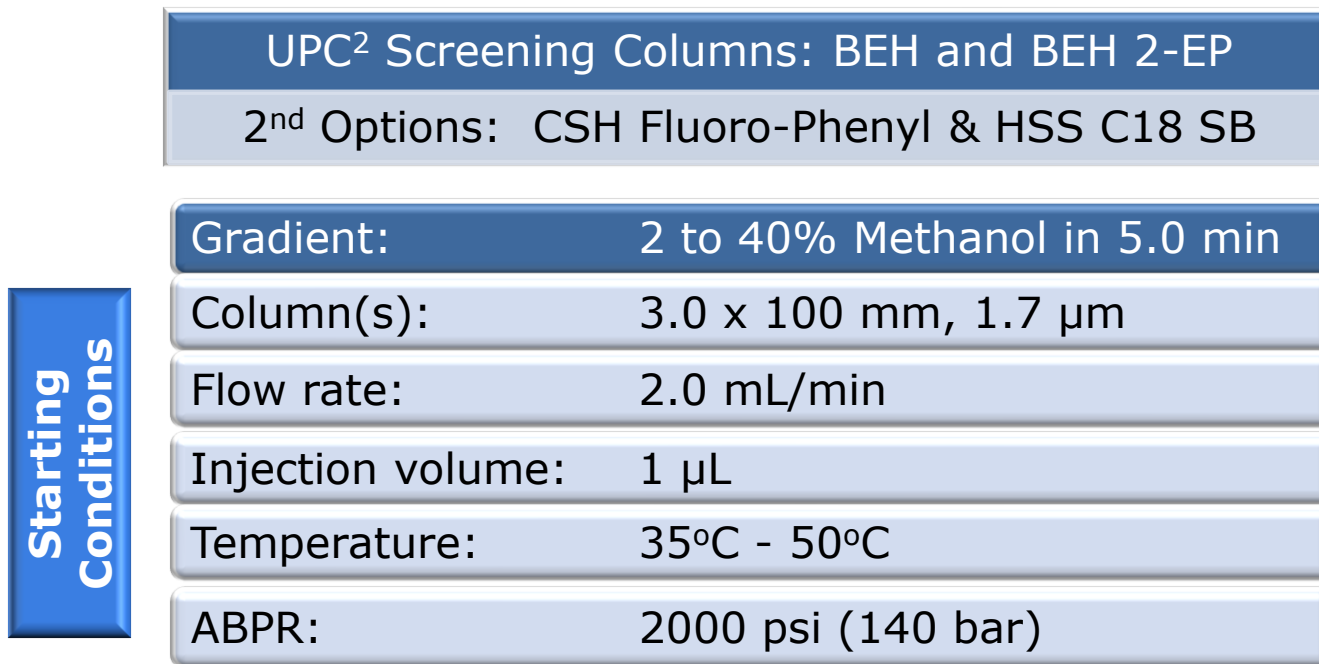
B2: Methanol/Acetonitrile (1:1)

B3: Methanol containing 15 mM NH₄COOH & 2% HCOOH*

B4: Methanol containing 0.2% NH₄OH*

(*) – for use with BEH and BEH 2-EP columns only

Getting Started: Initial Screening Conditions



Poor Peak
Shape?

Insufficient
Retention?

Inadequate
Selectivity?

How can we optimize these parameters?

Strategies for Improving Peak Shape

Use Additives In Screening Protocol:
Acidic Compounds: 0.5% HCOOH
Basic Compounds: 0.2% NH₄OH with 3.0% H₂O

Not Resolved

Try Alternative Additives*:
Bases: Alkyl amines, ammonium acetate
Acids: Citric acid, acetic acid

Not Resolved

Increase Concentration of Additive or
use 20 mM NH₄COOH / 2% HCOOH or
add 2 to 5% H₂O

Not Resolved

Try Different Column Chemistry

Return to
initial
screening
conditions

Resolved

Resolved

Resolved

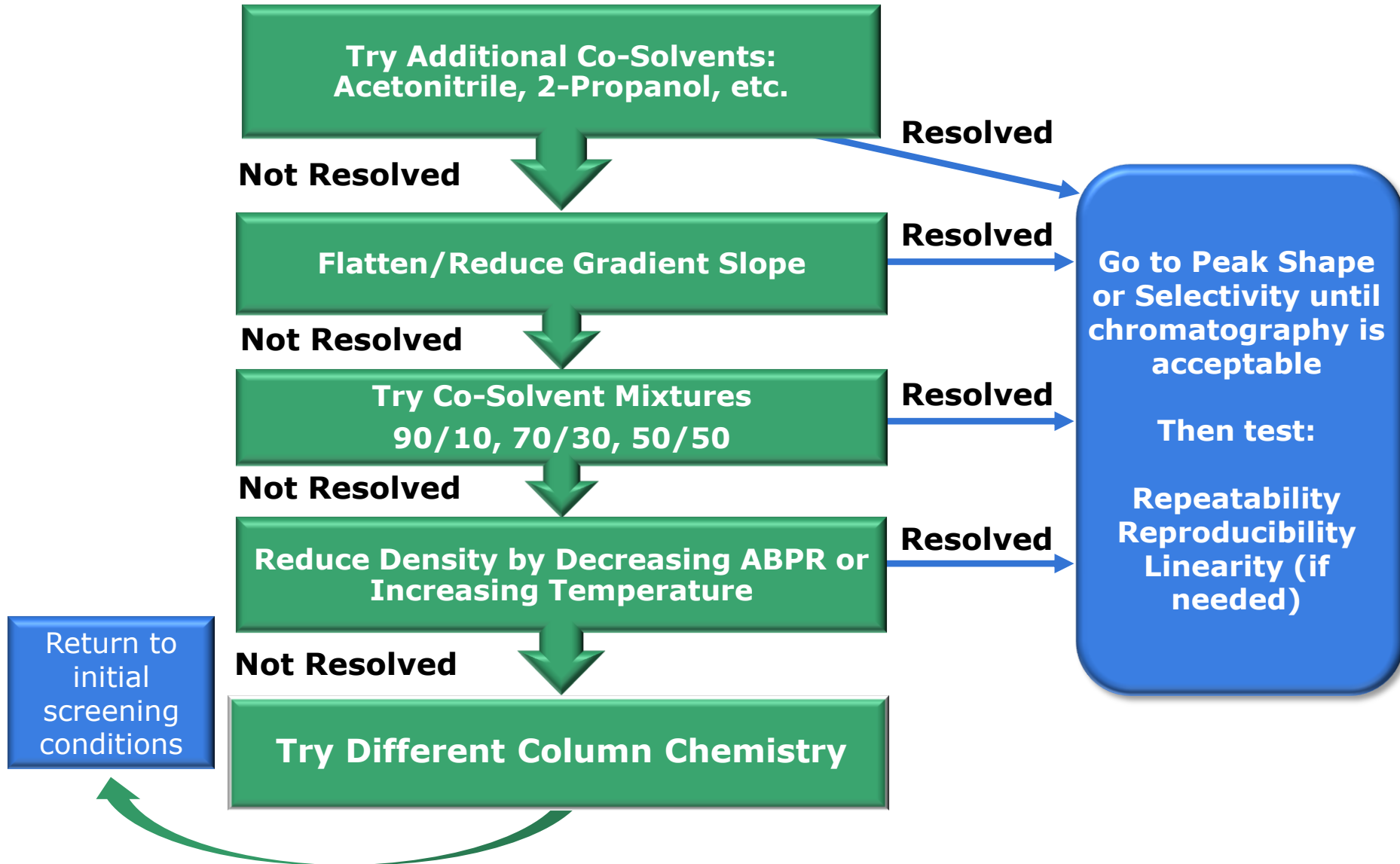
**Go to Retention or
Selectivity until
chromatography is
acceptable**

Then test:

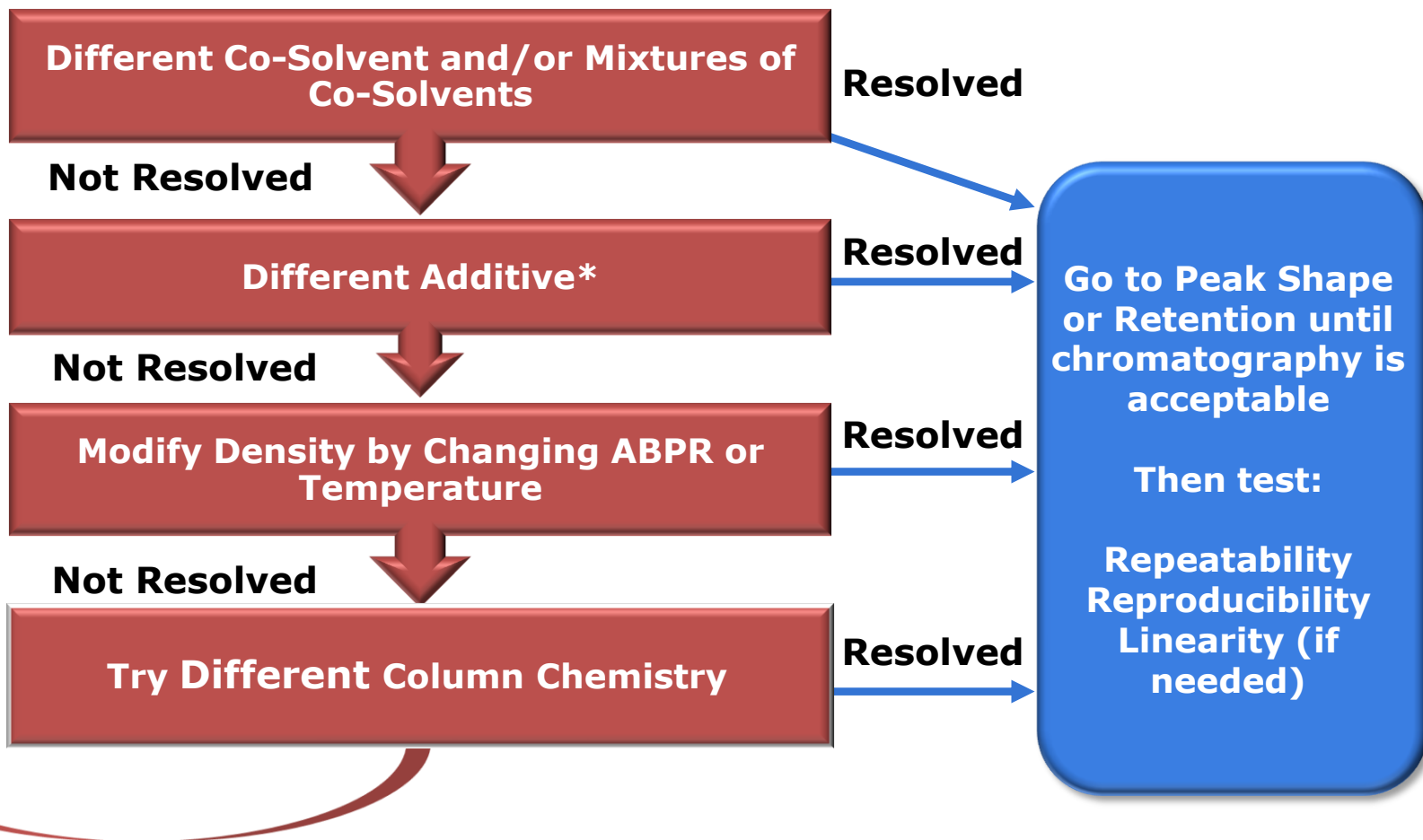
**Repeatability
Reproducibility
Linearity (if
needed)**

(*) – Ensure additive is compatible with mode of detection

Strategies for Increasing Retention



Strategies for Changing Selectivity



(*) – Ensure additive is compatible with mode of detection

- What is UPC²?
- Getting Started
- **Important Considerations for UPC²**
 - **Setup Guidelines**
 - **Co-Solvents**
 - **Mobile Phase Additives**
 - **Sample Diluents**
 - **Pressure and Temperature**
- UPC² as a Replacement for NPLC
- Summary

Getting Started: Instrument Setup Guidelines

- Do NOT use *Parafilm*® to cover bottles (it will dissolve)
 - Use bottle with cap
- Use only Pyrex® (Borosilicate 3.3) bottles or equivalent
- Use highest quality co-solvents and additives
- Use food-grade CO₂ (99.97% pure) or higher
- Keep all co-solvent, needle-wash and seal-wash lines primed
- Contact your local Waters Service Representative with additional questions

Getting Started: Needle Wash and Seal Wash Solvents


- Needle wash solvents flush the internal and external portions of the needle to prevent carryover
 - The weak and strong washes should contain a co-solvent compatible with your sample
 - Starting recommendations:
 - Weak needle wash: methanol/2-propanol (1:1)
 - Strong needle wash: methanol
 - Adjust needle wash strengths based upon application requirements

- Recommended seal wash is 100% methanol

The Role of Co-Solvents in Convergence Chromatography

- UPC² with pure CO₂ has limited utility due to the poor solvating power of CO₂
 - CO₂ has the eluting strength of heptane in UPC²
 - Adding an organic co-solvent *increases* the solvating power of CO₂
- The co-solvent also affects retentivity and selectivity
- **The role of the co-solvent in UPC² is analogous to that of the strong solvent in liquid chromatography**


Eluotropic (Eluting Strength) Series

Co-Solvent	Eluting Strength	
Pentane, Hexane, Heptane	Weakest	
Xylene		
Toluene		
Diethyl ether		
Dichloromethane		
Chloroform		
Acetone		
Dioxane		
THF		
MTBE		
Ethyl acetate		
DMSO		
Acetonitrile		
2-Propanol		
Ethanol		
Methanol		Strongest

CO₂ strength →

Typical Co-Solvents Used in UPC²

CO₂ strength →

Co-Solvent	Eluting Strength	
Pentane, Hexane, Heptane	Weakest	
Xylene		
Toluene		
Diethyl ether		
Dichloromethane		
Chloroform		
Acetone		
Dioxane		
THF		
MTBE		
Ethyl acetate		
DMSO		
Acetonitrile		Strongest
2-Propanol		
Ethanol		
Methanol		

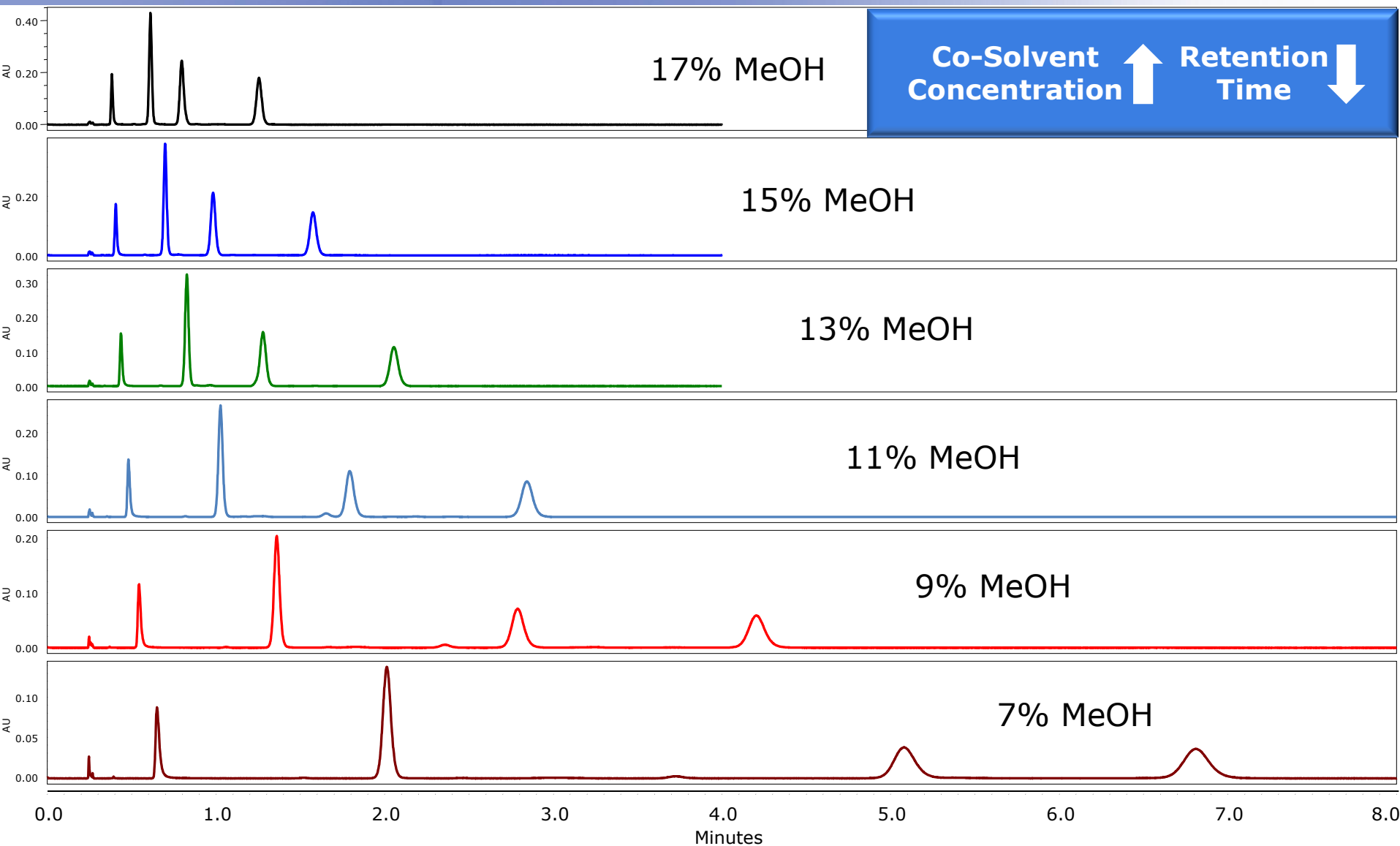
**Most
commonly
used co-
solvents**

Co-Solvent Points to Remember in UPC²

- Co-solvents added to CO₂ generally decrease an analyte's retention time. As you increase the co-solvent concentration **the polarity of the mobile phase is changed** resulting in decrease retention time(s)
- Different types of co-solvents and co-solvent gradients can be used to alter selectivity and retention times



Effect of Co-Solvent Concentration on Retention

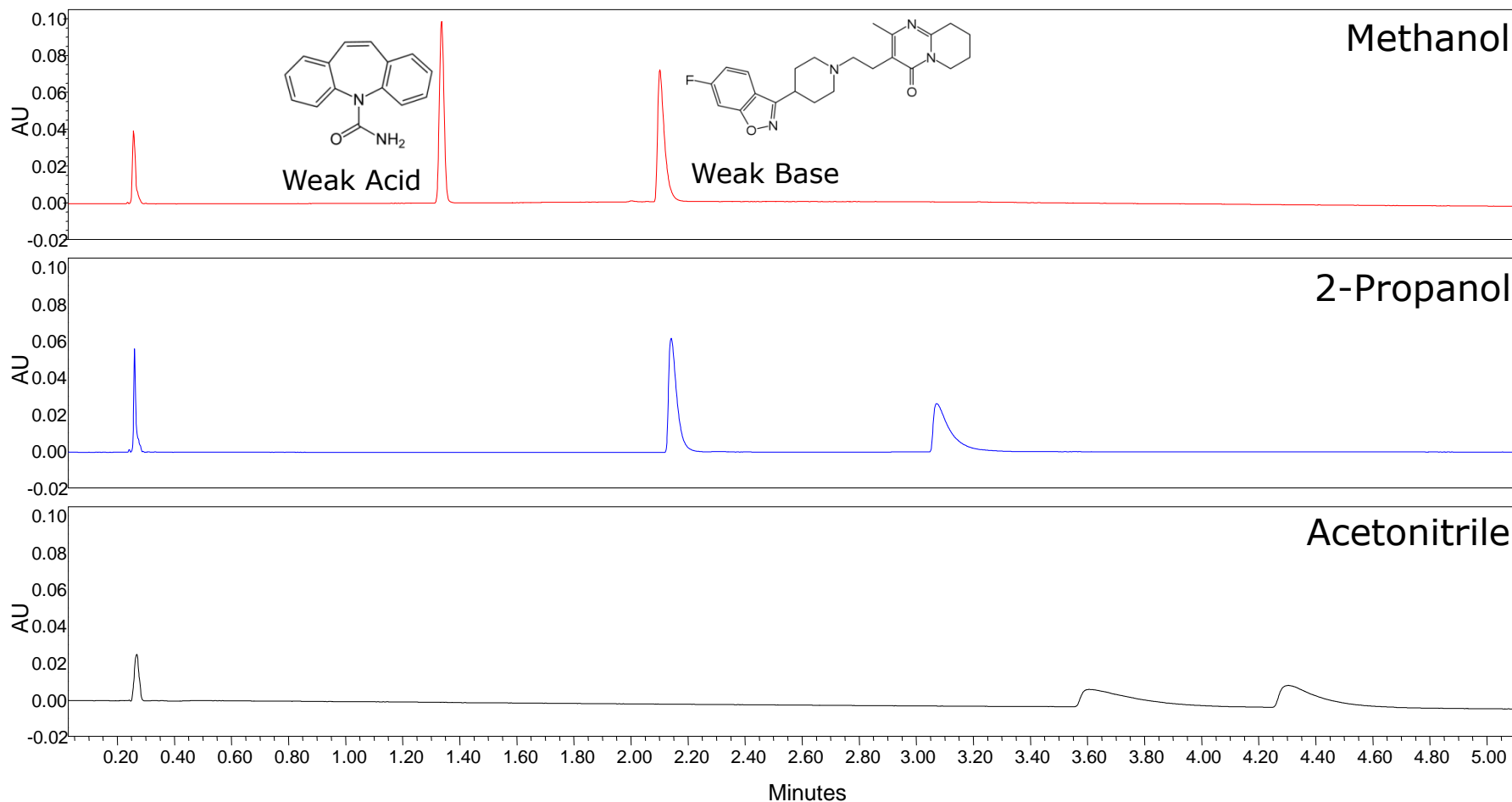


Effect of Co-Solvent *Strength* on Retention

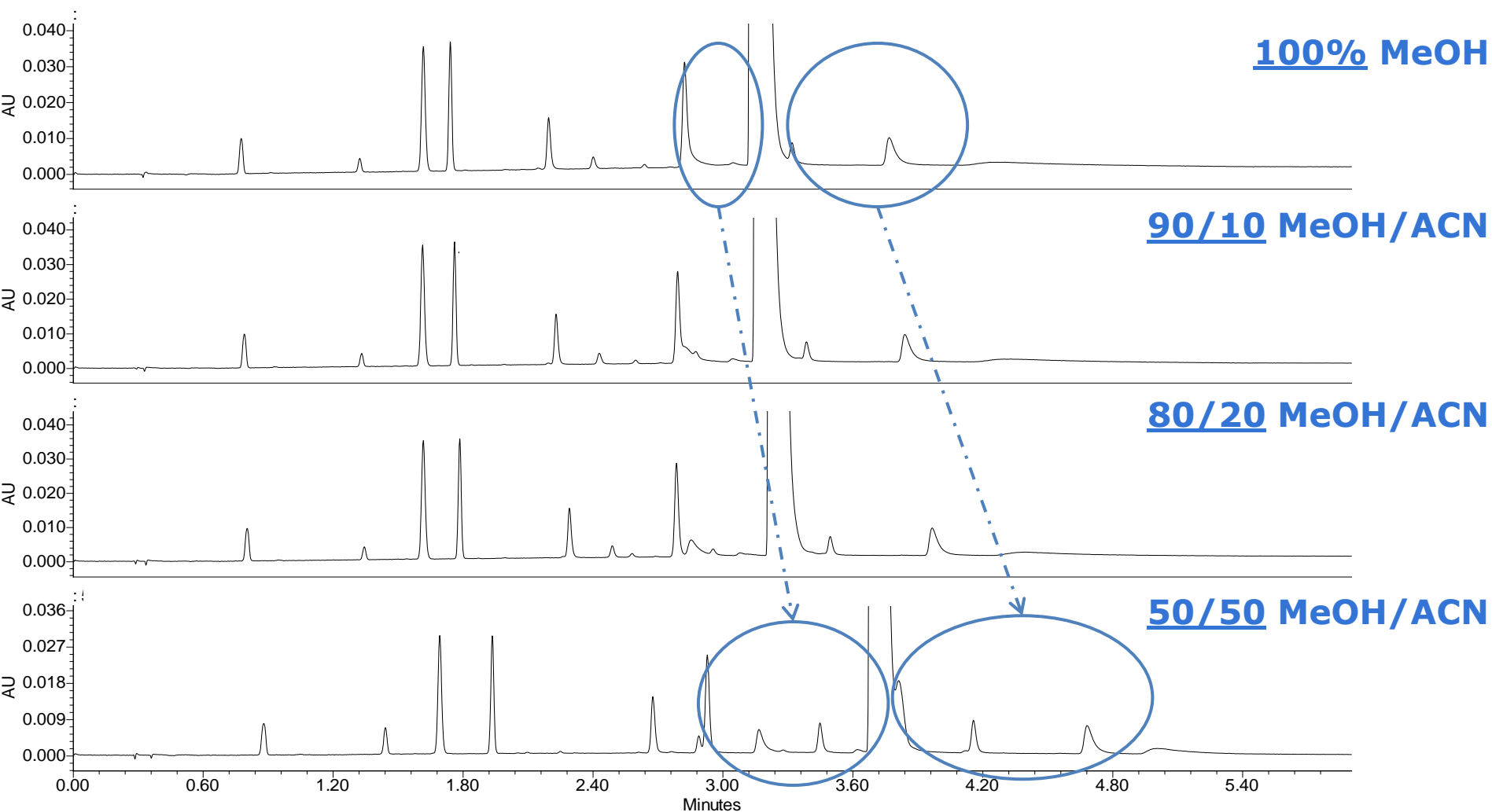
5% to 40% (5.0 min) gradient using different co-solvents

Co-Solvent Strength ↓

Retention Time ↑



Mixing Co-Solvents in UPC² Metoclopramide and Related Impurities

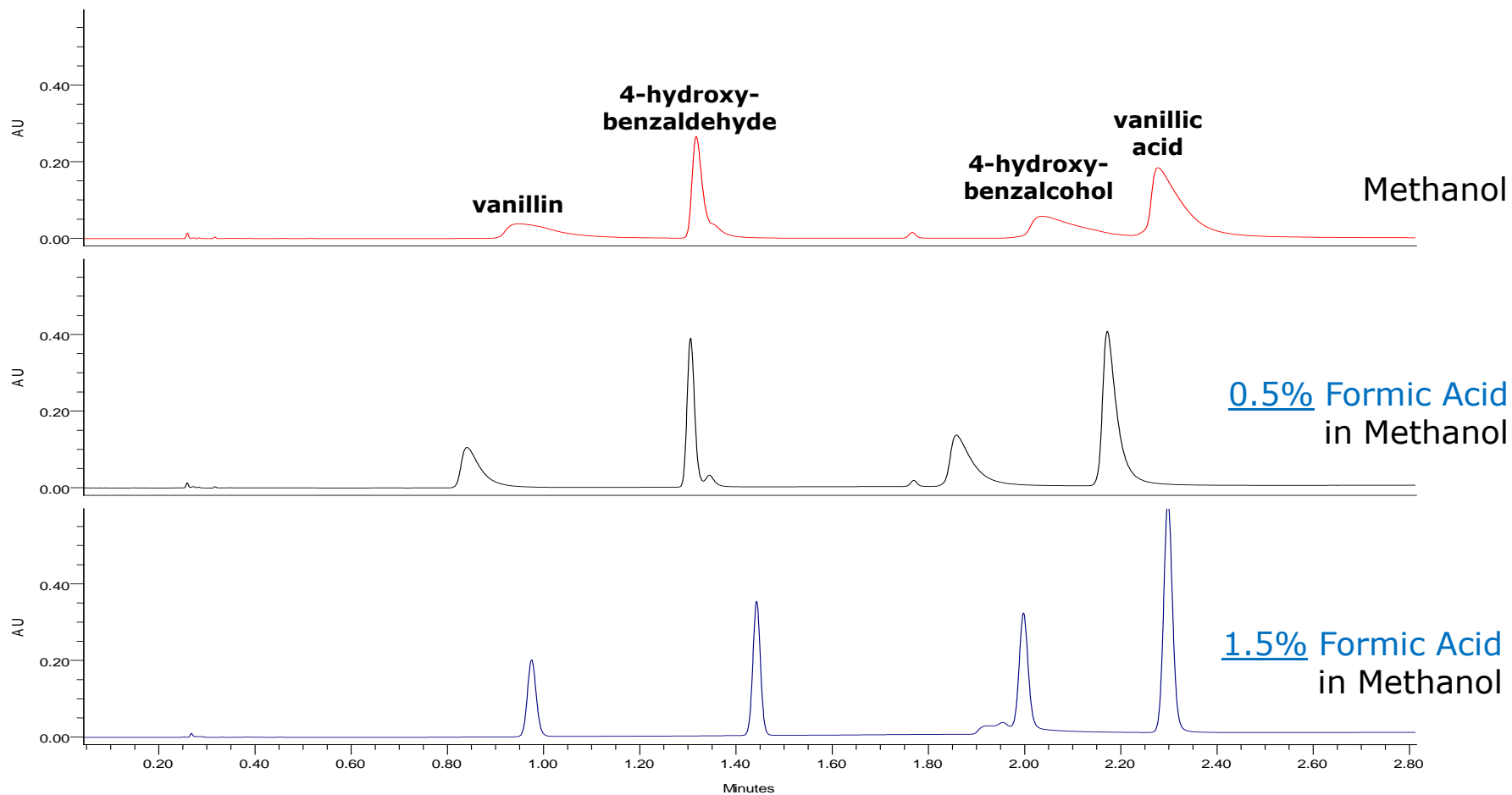


30.7 mM NH₄COOH added to
all co-solvent mixtures

- Additives are used in UPC² to improve the peak shape(s) and/or resolution of the separation
 - As in LC, additives can modify the stationary phase surface or act as ion pairs (can change selectivity)
 - Varying additive *concentration* and/or *type* can improve the separation and/or peak shape(s)

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 - As in LC, additives can modify the stationary phase surface or act as ion pairs (can change selectivity)
 - Varying additive *concentration* and/or *type* can improve the separation and/or peak shape(s)
- *Basic additives* can improve peak shape and may slightly change the selectivity of *basic* compounds
 - Examples: ammonium hydroxide, 2-propylamine, triethylamine, etc.
- *Acidic additives* can improve peak shape and may slightly change the selectivity of *acidic* compounds
 - Examples: trifluoroacetic acid, formic acid, acetic acid, etc.

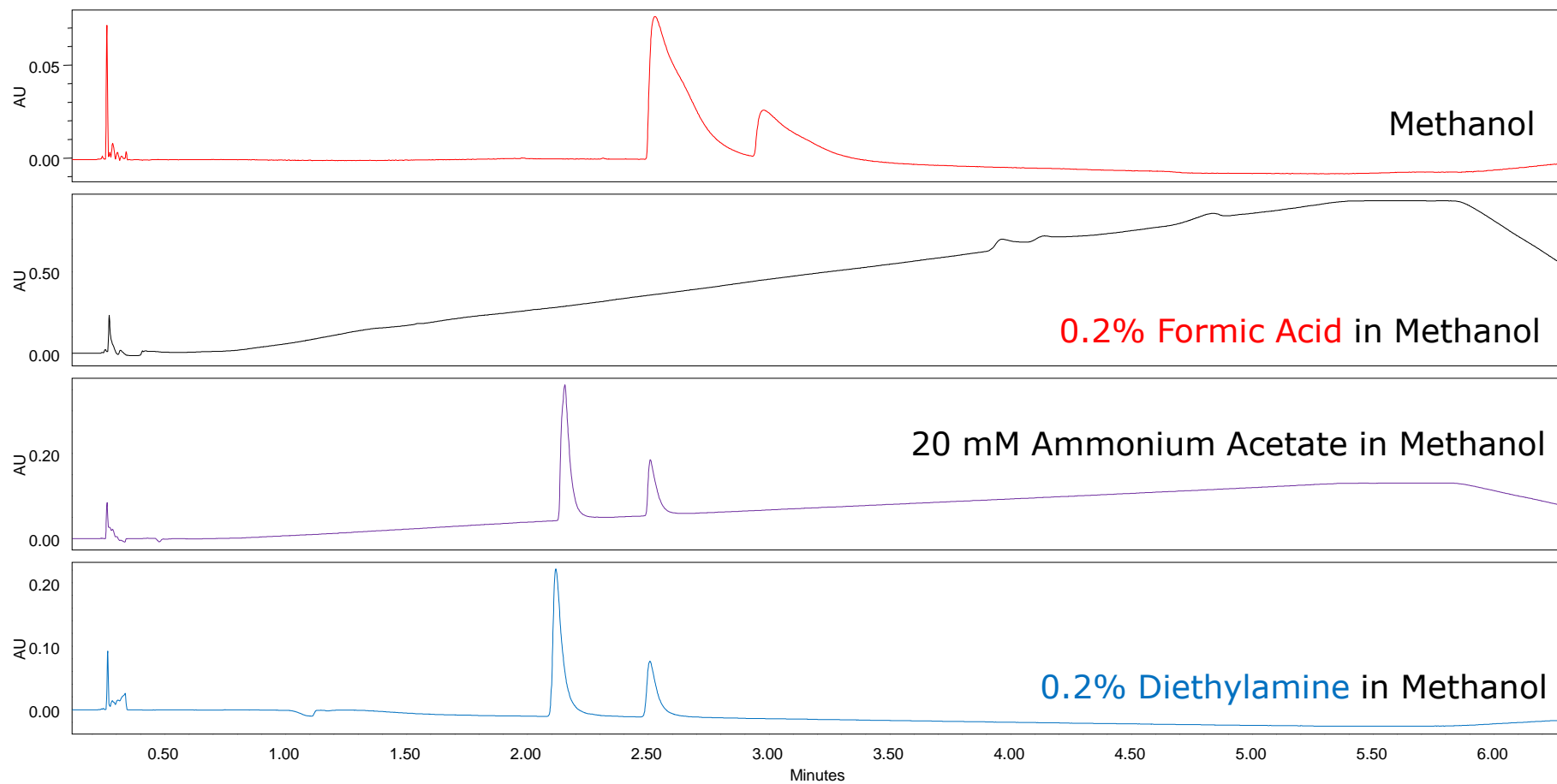
Mobile Phase Additives: Effect of Concentration



Peak shape of acidic compounds *improved* with *increasing* concentration of acidic additive

Effect of Additives on Strong Bases (β Blockers)

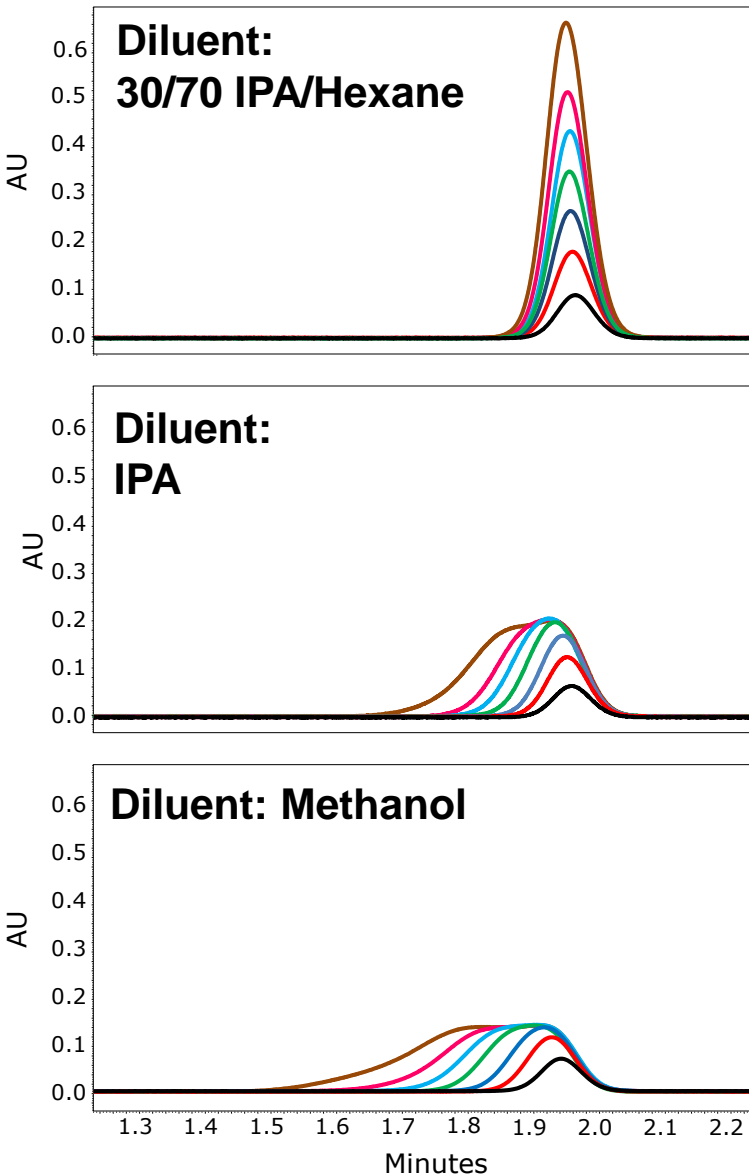
5% to 40% (5.0 min) gradient using
methanol & methanol w/different additives



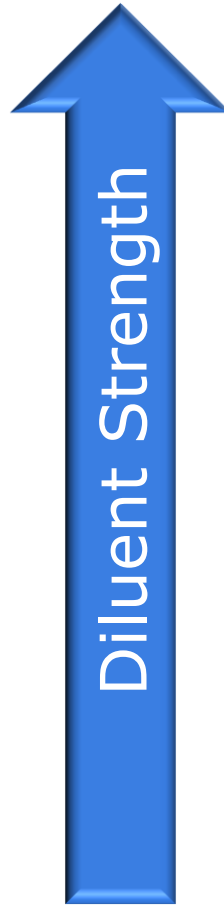
Proper additive selection can improve peak shape

- Sample diluent can strongly affect peak shape and solubility in UPC² (just like in normal-phase LC, reversed-phase LC, and HILIC)
- Use as weak a sample diluent as possible (balance analyte solubility and peak shape)
- Reduce (or eliminate) water content in sample
- Good generic injection solvent: 90/10 heptane/2-propanol

Sample Diluent Strength and Peak Shape



Weak



Strong

Effect of diluent on peak shape of butylparaben

Injection Volume (μL)
0.5
1.0
1.5
2.0
2.5
3.0
4.0

Column: ACQUITY UPC² BEH 2-EP 2.1 x 150 mm
Method: 97/3 CO₂/MeOH; 2 mL/min; 40 C; 2000 psi ABPR; UV@254 nm (350-450 nm compensation)

Effect of Pressure (Density) on UPC² Separations

■ Pressure

- The ABPR backpressure settings affect retention time by changing the density before the release of pressure
- As ABPR pressure *increases*, the density *increases* and retention time *decreases*



Effect of Pressure (Density) on UPC² Separations

■ Pressure

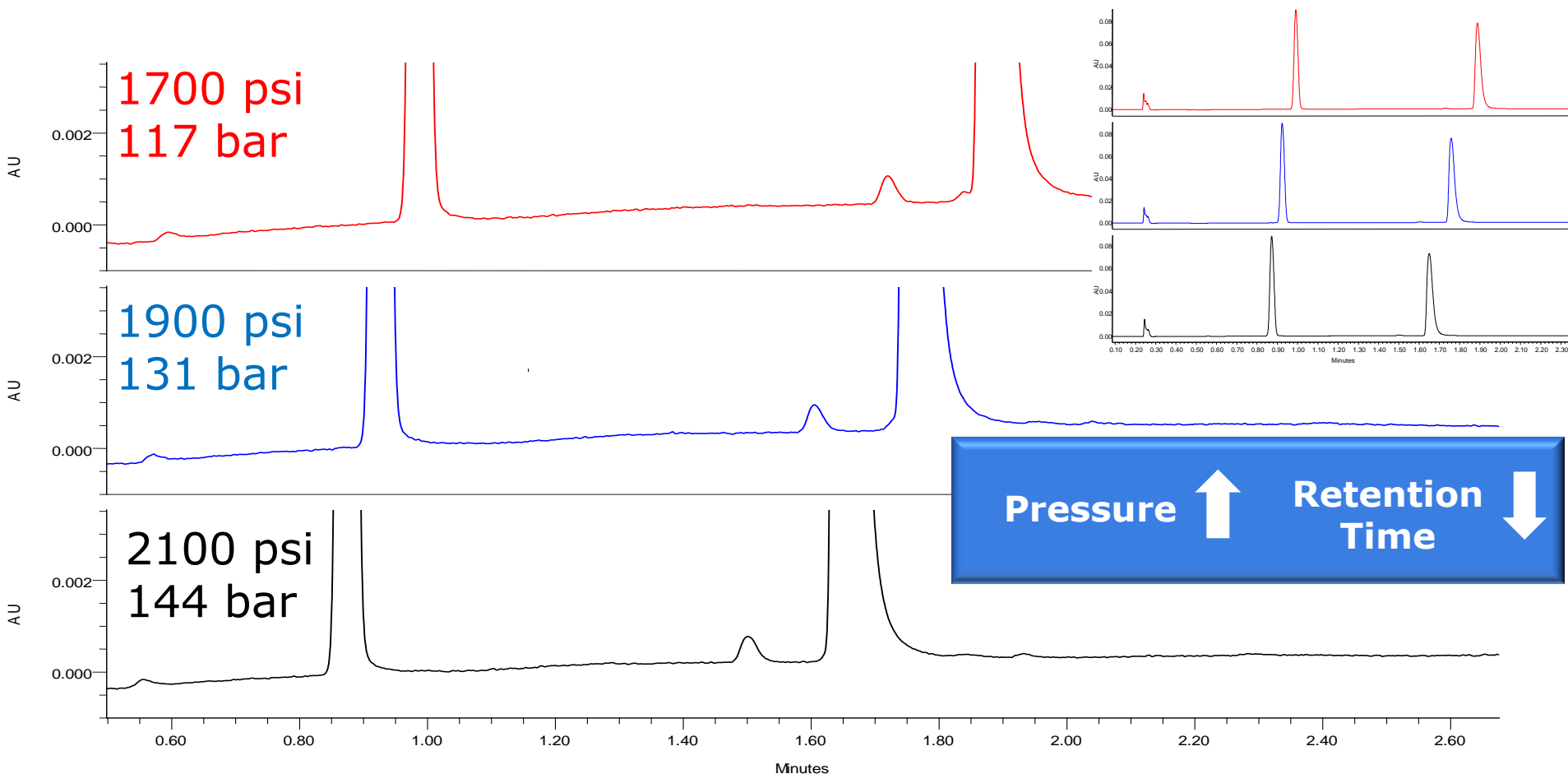
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■ **Mobile phase composition has a greater effect on retention than pressure or density**

- Pressure/density can be used to optimize/fine-tune your separation
- Typical operating ABPR range: 1500 – 2200 psi (100 – 150 bar)

Effect of Pressure (Density) on Retention in UPC²



Column: ACQUITY UPC² BEH 2-EP, 3.0 x 100 mm, UV@254 nm,
Temperature: 60°C, Gradient: 10-35% Methanol in 5.0 min

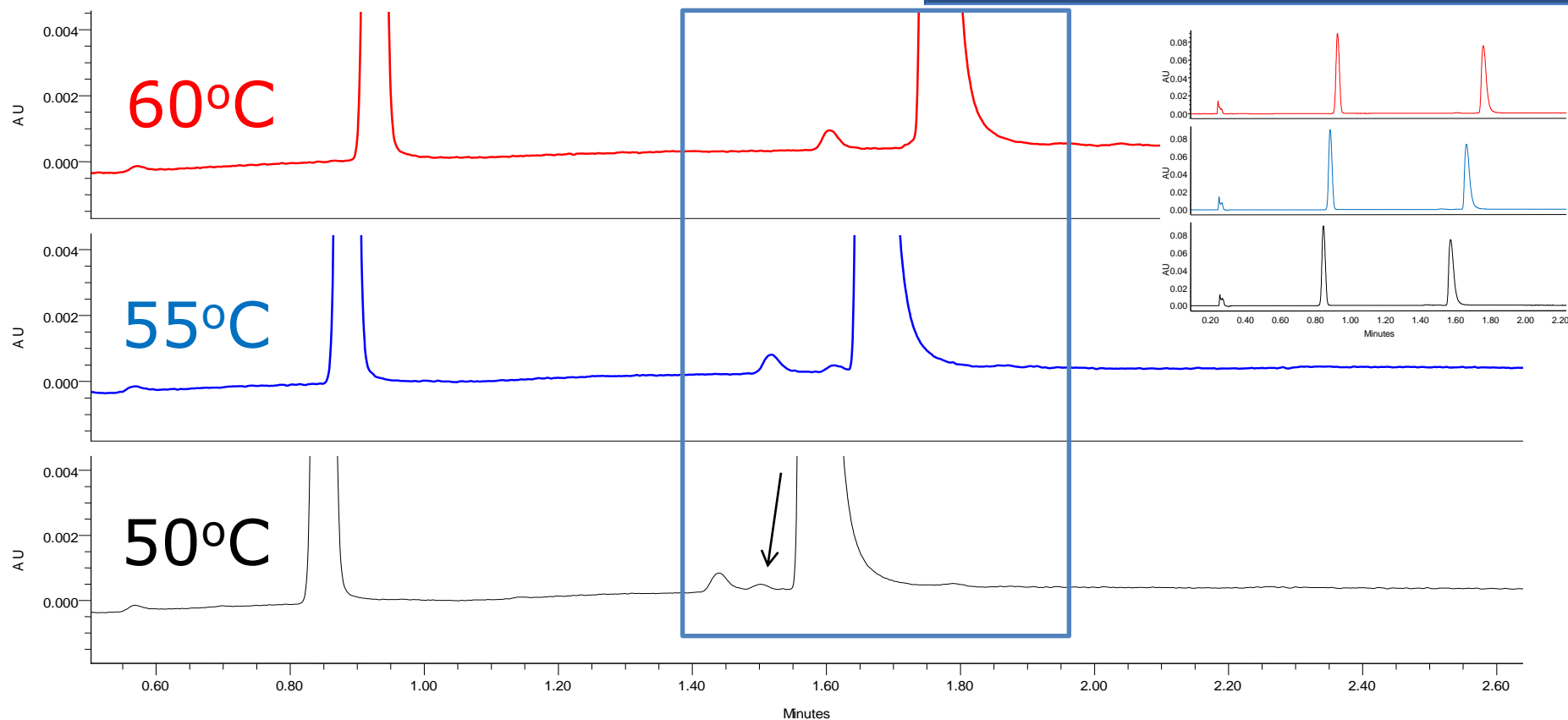
- Column temperature affects selectivity and retention in UPC²
 - Different analytes are affected to differing degrees
- Like pressure, column temperature affects the mobile phase density in the column
 - As column temperature *increases*, the mobile phase density *decreases*, and retention time *increases* (**this is the opposite of LC**)



Effect of Column Temperature in UPC²

Temperature ↑

Retention Time ↑



Column: ACQUITY UPC² BEH 2-EP, 3.0 x 100 mm, UV@254,
Gradient: 10-35% Methanol in 5.0 min, ABPR: 1900 psi

Summary: Optimizing Separations in UPC²

	Peak Shape	Retention	Selectivity
Stationary Phase	4	2	1
Co-Solvent	3	1	2
Additive	1	4	3
Pressure*		3	4
Flow Rate*		3	4
Temperature*		3	3
Injection Solvent	2		

(*) – Affect density

1 - Greatest effect
4 - Least effect

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UPC² as a Replacement for Normal Phase LC

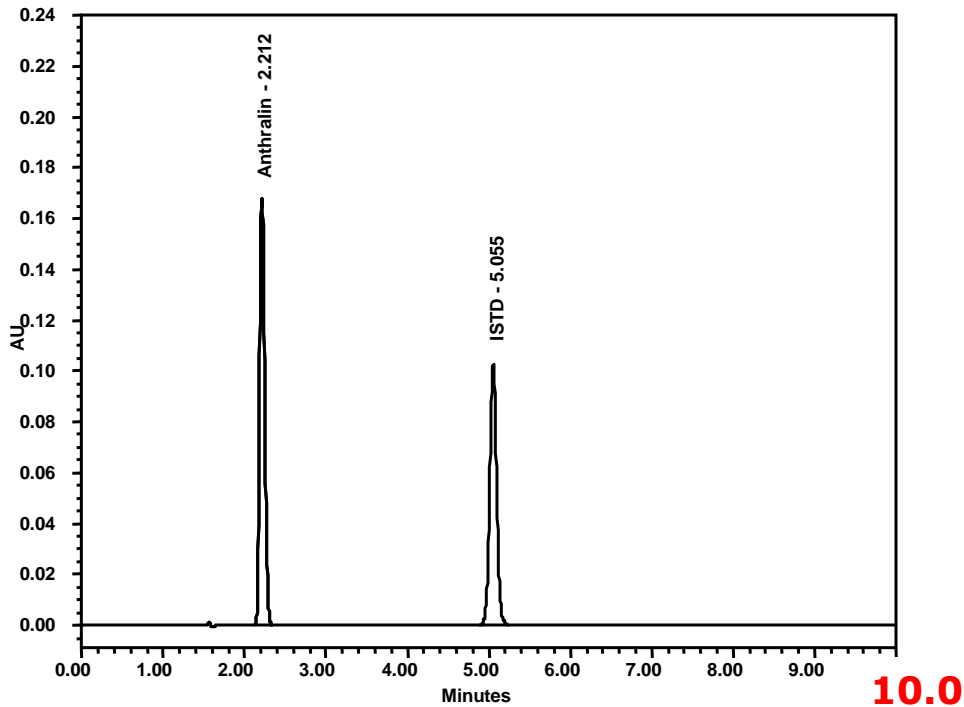
- Normal-Phase LC (NPLC) methods use solvents (aliphatic hydrocarbons and chlorinated solvents) that many laboratories would like to reduce for health, safety, environmental, and cost reasons
- Since the principles of UPC² are similar to those of NPLC, methods should be able to be converted to UPC²
 - Reduces solvent usage and disposal
 - Lowers the cost per analysis while enhancing green initiatives

UPC² as a Replacement for Normal Phase LC

- Normal-Phase LC (NPLC) methods use solvents (aliphatic hydrocarbons and chlorinated solvents) that many laboratories would like to reduce for health, safety, environmental, and cost reasons
- Since the principles of UPC² are similar to those of NPLC, methods should be able to be converted to UPC²
 - Reduces solvent usage and disposal
 - Lowers the cost per analysis while enhancing green initiatives
- **UPC² offers significant *performance* advantages over NPLC**
 - **Better reproducibility**
 - **Ability to perform gradient separations (most NPLC separations are isocratic)**
 - **Compatible with mass detection**

Replacing NPLC with UPC²: Anthralin USP Drug Substance Assay

Normal Phase HPLC

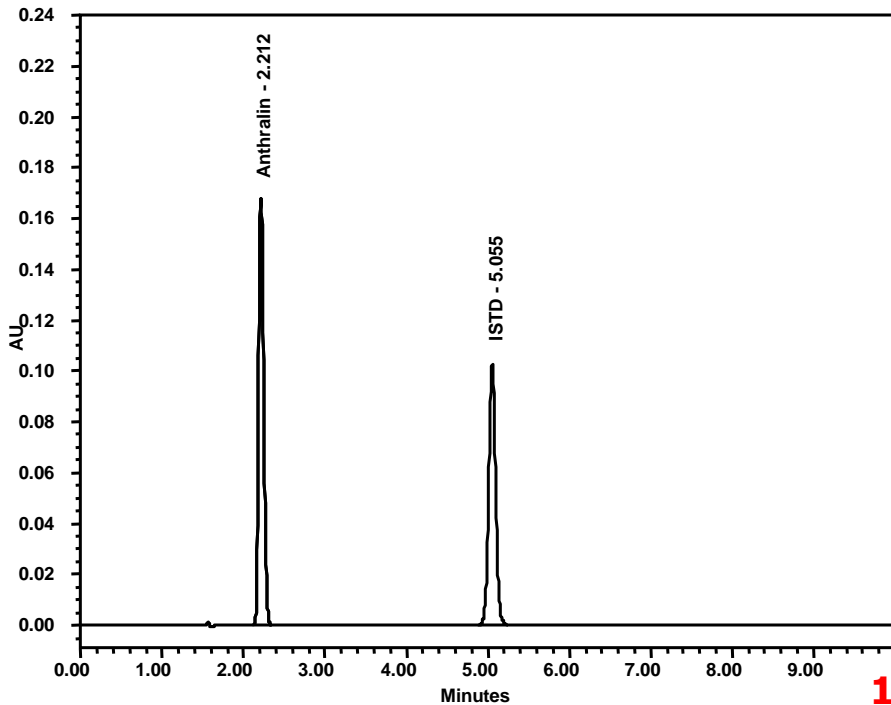


- 4.6 x 250 mm silica NPLC column (L3)
- Hexane / Dichloromethane / glacial acetic acid
- 2.0 mL/min

Cost approx: \$0.92 per run

Replacing NPLC with UPC²: Anthralin USP Drug Substance Assay

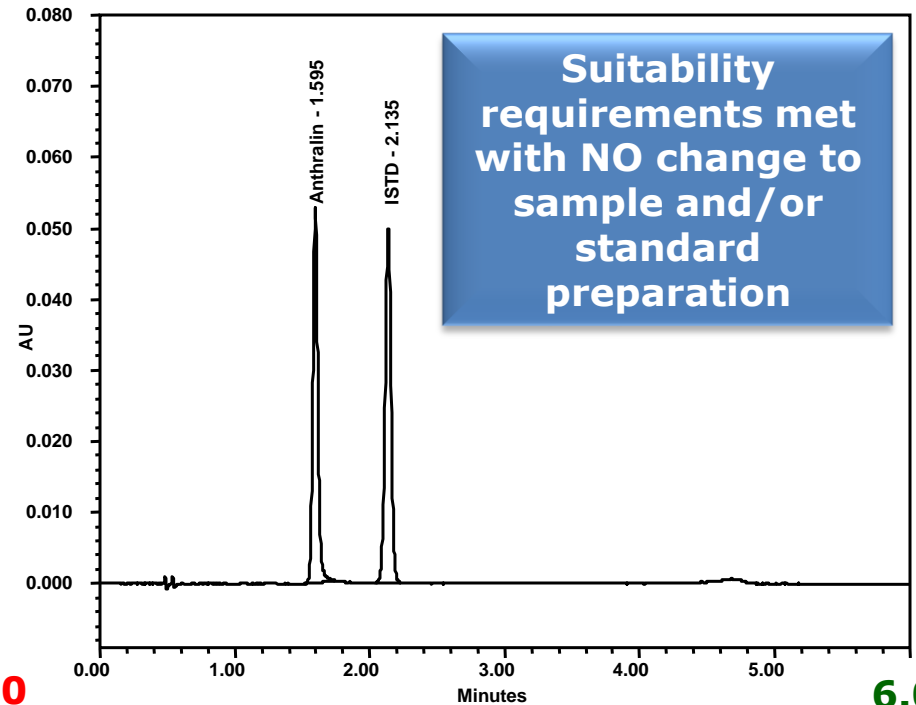
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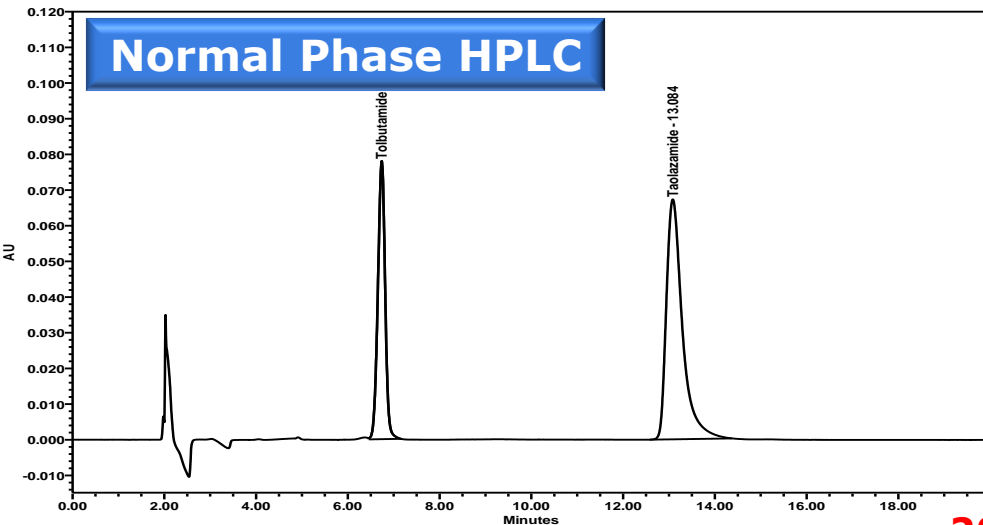
SFC



- Viridis 2-EP 4.6 x 150 mm
- CO₂ / MeOH / glacial acetic acid
- 3.5 mL/min

Cost approx: \$0.04 per run

Replacing NPLC with UPC²: Reducing Particle Size & Column Dimensions



Normal Phase LC USP Method Chromatographic Assay of Tolbutamide

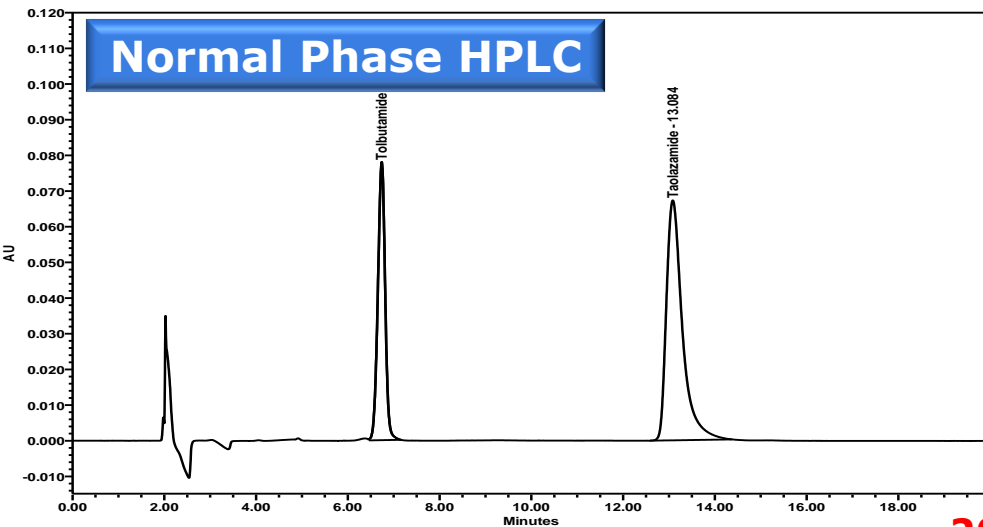
4.0 x 300 mm, silica column (L3)
1.5 mL/min

Hexane, water-saturated-hexane, THF, alcohol, and glacial acetic acid (475:475:20:15:9)

Solvent cost per run ~ \$1.40

20.0

Replacing NPLC with UPC²: Reducing Particle Size & Column Dimensions



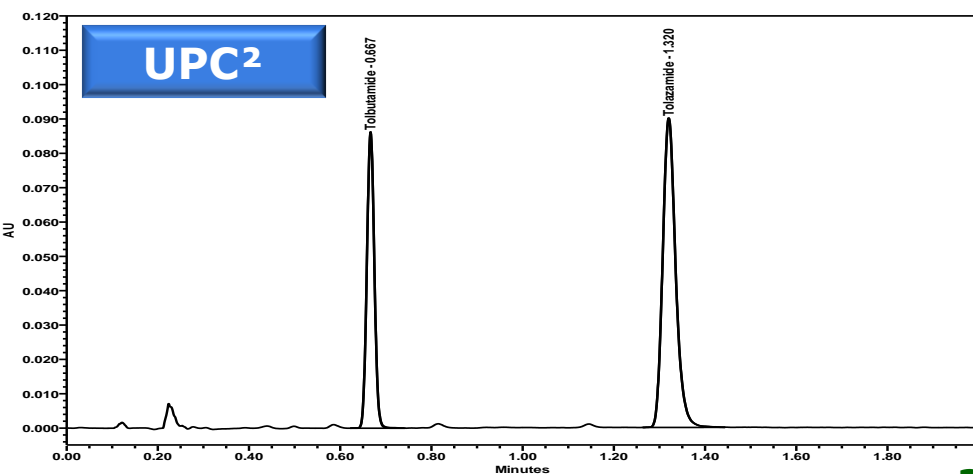
20.0

Normal Phase LC USP Method Chromatographic Assay of Tolbutamide

4.0 x 300 mm, silica column (L3)
1.5 mL/min

Hexane, water-saturated-hexane, THF, alcohol, and glacial acetic acid (475:475:20:15:9)

Solvent cost per run ~ \$1.40



2.00

UPC² Method

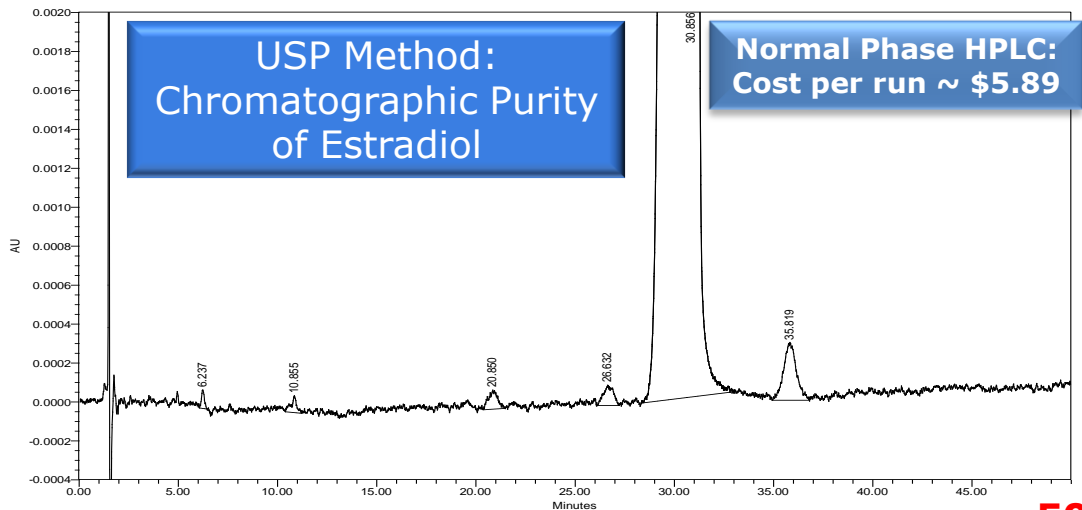
ACQUITY UPC² BEH, 3.0 x 100 mm, 1.7 μ m
2.5 mL/min

CO₂ / MeOH / IPA (95/2.5/2.5) containing 0.2% TFA

Solvent cost per run ~ \$0.01

UPC² is 10X faster

Replacing NPLC with UPC²: Low Level Impurity Analyses by UPC²

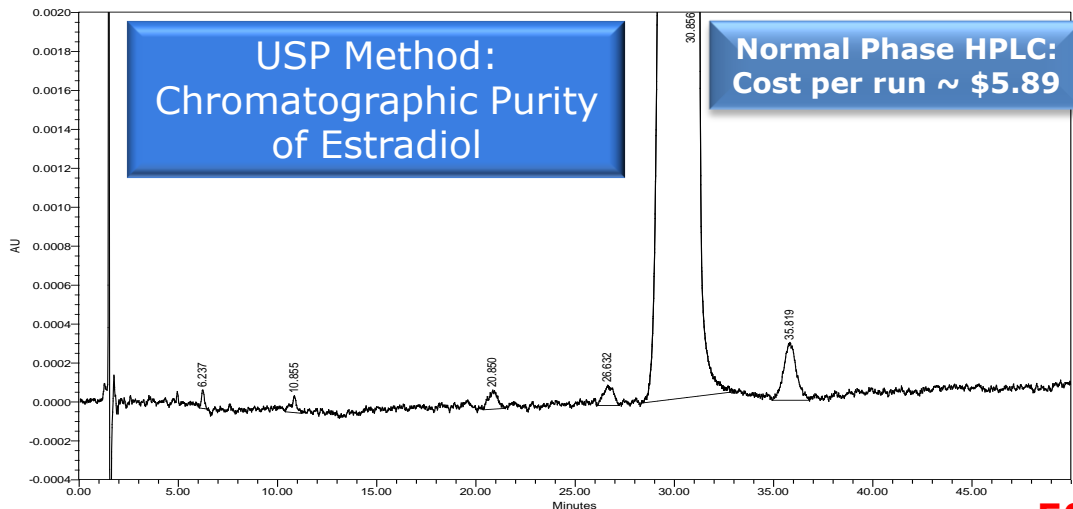


50.0

4.6 250 mm silica column
2,2,4-trimethylpentane / n-butyl chloride /
MeOH, 2.0 mL/min

Compound	RT	%Area	S/N
Unk. Impurity	6.24	0.006	2.9
Unk. Impurity	Not Found	---	---
Unk. Impurity	10.86	0.01	2.7
Unk. Impurity	Not Found	---	---
Unk. Impurity	20.85	0.018	3
Unk. Impurity	26.63	0.021	3.2
Estradiol	30.86	99.87	---
Main Impurity	36.81	0.077	9.2

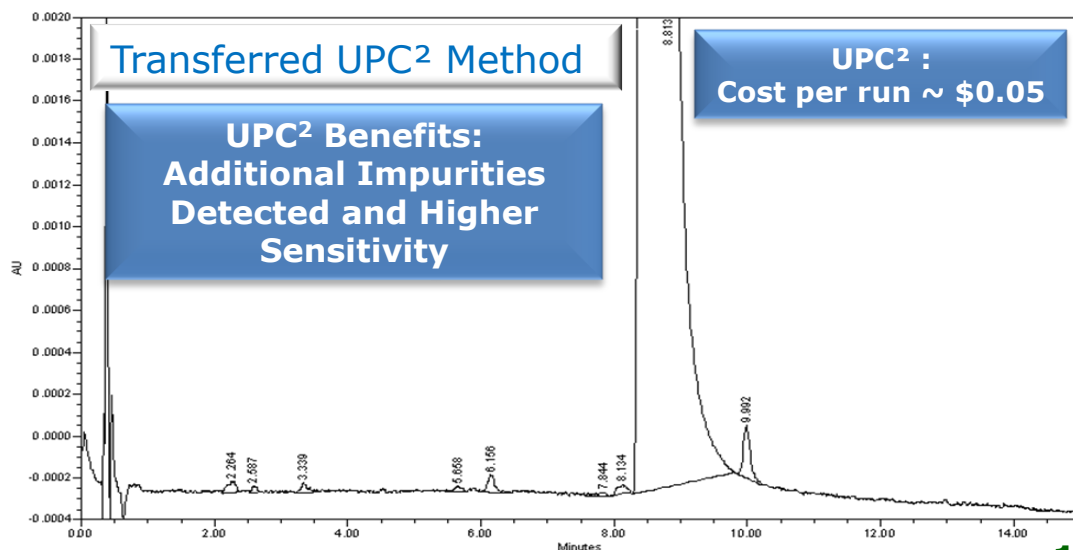
Replacing NPLC with UPC²: Low Level Impurity Analyses by UPC²



50.0

4.6 250 mm silica column
2,2,4-trimethylpentane / n-butyl chloride /
MeOH, 2.0 mL/min

Compound	RT	%Area	S/N
Unk. Impurity	6.24	0.006	2.9
Unk. Impurity	Not Found	---	---
Unk. Impurity	10.86	0.01	2.7
Unk. Impurity	Not Found	---	---
Unk. Impurity	20.85	0.018	3
Unk. Impurity	26.63	0.021	3.2
Estradiol	30.86	99.87	---
Main Impurity	36.81	0.077	9.2



14.0

2.1 x 150 mm ACQUITY UPC² BEH, 1.7 μm
CO₂ / MeOH

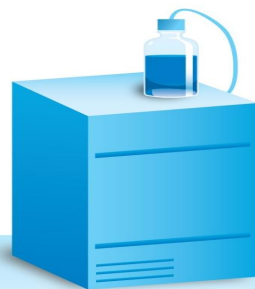
Compound	RT	%Area	S/N
Unk. Impurity	2.26	0.012	3.4
Unk. Impurity	2.59	0.004	1.9
Unk. Impurity	3.34	0.01	3.1
Unk. Impurity	5.66	0.006	1.7
Unk. Impurity	6.15	0.016	5.5
Unk. Impurity	8.13	0.013	3.1
Estradiol	8.81	99.89	---
Main Impurity	9.99	0.046	16

- What is UPC²?
- Getting Started
- Important Considerations for UPC²
- UPC² as a Replacement for NPLC
- **Summary**

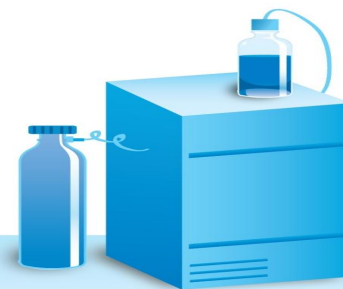
Summary: UPC² Applications Examples



GC
Gas Chromatography



LC
Liquid Chromatography



CC
Convergence Chromatography

Azo dyes		✓	✓
Explosives	✓	✓	✓
Bile acid profiling	✓	✓	✓
Lipids	✓	✓	✓
Natural products	✓	✓	✓
Agrochemicals		✓	✓
OLEDs		✓	✓
Extractables	✓	✓	✓
Fat-soluble vitamins		✓	✓
Steroids/estrogens	✓	✓	✓
Positional isomers	✓	✓	✓
Vitamin D metabolites		✓	✓

- UltraPerformance Convergence Chromatography is a powerful analytical technique that utilizes CO₂ and co-solvent(s) as mobile phases
- UPC² streamlines laboratory workflow with the ability to retain and separate any compound soluble in an organic solvent

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- UPC² streamlines laboratory workflow with the ability to retain and separate any compound soluble in an organic solvent
- Peak shape, retention and selectivity can be improved and manipulated by varying and understanding the roles of co-solvent, additive, sample diluent, pressure, temperature and stationary phase
- UPC² is a sustainable (green) chromatographic technique that offers significant advantages over normal-phase LC including lower cost per analysis, superior reproducibility, and compatibility with modern detection techniques such as mass spectrometry

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Thank You For Your Time and Attention

**For more information please visit:
<http://www.waters.com/UPC2>**

- Instrumentation information available on the ACQUITY UPC² documentation CD (PN 715002482) and at www.waters.com:
 - ACQUITY UPC² System Guide
 - ACQUITY UPC² Operator's Overview & Maintenance Information Guides:
 - ACQUITY UPC² Binary Solvent Manager
 - ACQUITY UPC² Convergence Manager
 - ACQUITY UPC² Photodiode Array Detector
 - ACQUITY UPC² Column Compartments

- ACQUITY UPC² Columns Care & Use Manual (PN 720004349EN)