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Book Review: *HPLC: Practical and Industrial Applications*, Joel Swadesh, Ph.D., Editor, CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL ISBN 0-8493-2682-6 358 pages (1996)

The Editor of this book offers its goals in the Preface as follows: 'Books on chromatography are conventionally divided into theory, instrumentation and practice, or into isocratic vs. gradient techniques, or by class of analyte. The organization of the present work is somewhat unconventional in that it is structured to facilitate problem solving. There have been many attempts to write problem-solving approach texts, and one can become concerned when the opening of a new book suggests previous failures and few successes. Happily, this book succeeds even though it is multiauthored; it remains coherent and on target.

Problem solving itself is a topic with many definitions. As many definitions as there are problems to be solved it seems at times. There is the "Fix it so we can ship it" pressure. The "We are making 26 tons of terphthalic acid/hr and it just turned yellow!" crisis has many variations. Even more familiar to this reviewer is the complaint that a compendial method simply does not work or does not work anymore. It is not surprising then that some books on problem solving are anecdotal accounts of how specific problems were solved. The problem with such books is that the solutions reported are not general and might work only if the identical problem arose again.

This is an excellent book. The first chapter is worth the price, in fact. Yes, the urge to use anecdotes was satisfied but they are well done with attempts to suggest the more universal application of the principles involved. People write the individual chapters with significant expertise in the topical area, come from a variety of important fractions of the chemical, and the interface between chemistry and biology. Topics range from autosampling to process environment measurement and from RPLC to size exclusion. There is even a nonchromatography chapter on CZE! If I were to title this book, I might call it *Chemical Separations: Practical and Industrial Applications*, because principles of problem solving in separations chemistry are universal ones.

Could one teach from this book? Yes. **If** one supplements the targeted discussion in the book with 'homework' problems to make the point stick. It would not be an introductory course text, but this reviewer will attempt to use it at the next opportunity in a graduate-level course for chemists and bioengineers and do that without any trepidation. It will be an excellent introduction for scientists faced with responsibility in problem solving who are not intimate with the unique character of separation-related problems. If Swadesh can maintain the quality, this reviewer votes for yet another volume.