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Fuel Cell Materials Characterization

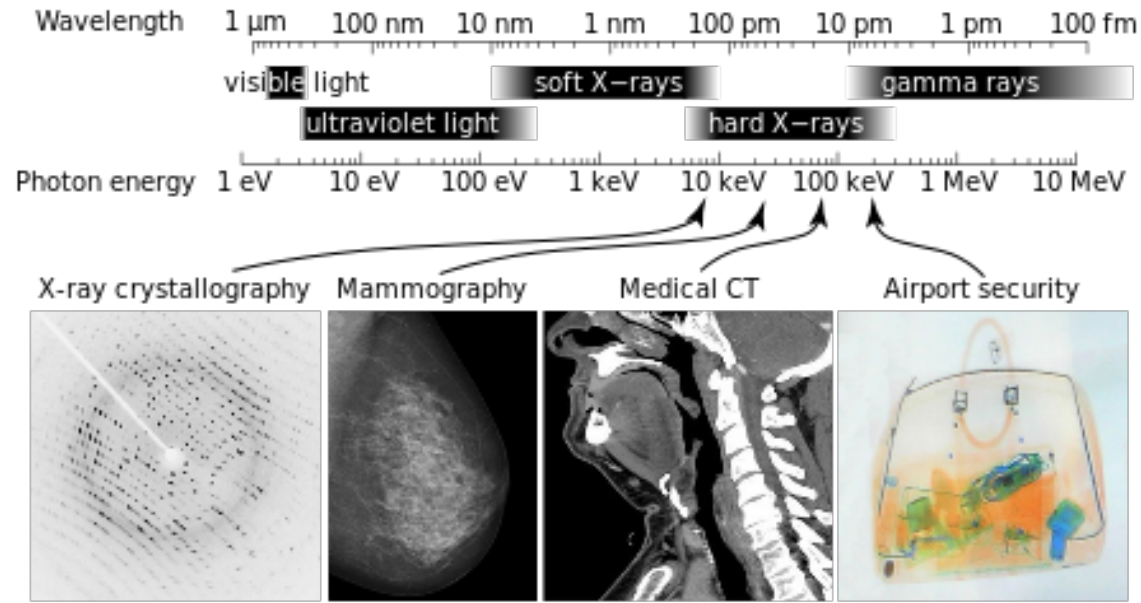
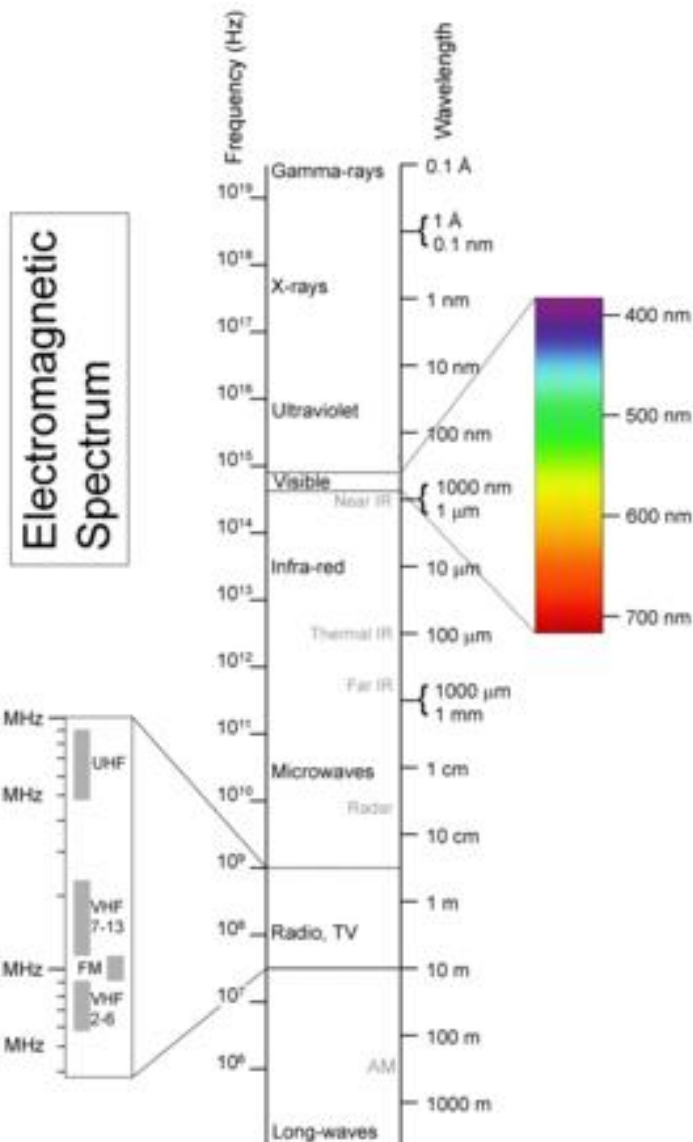
Part 1: X-ray diffraction and X-ray fluorescence

LANL Fuel Cell Short Course

Cortney Kreller

August 5, 2015

X-Ray Methods

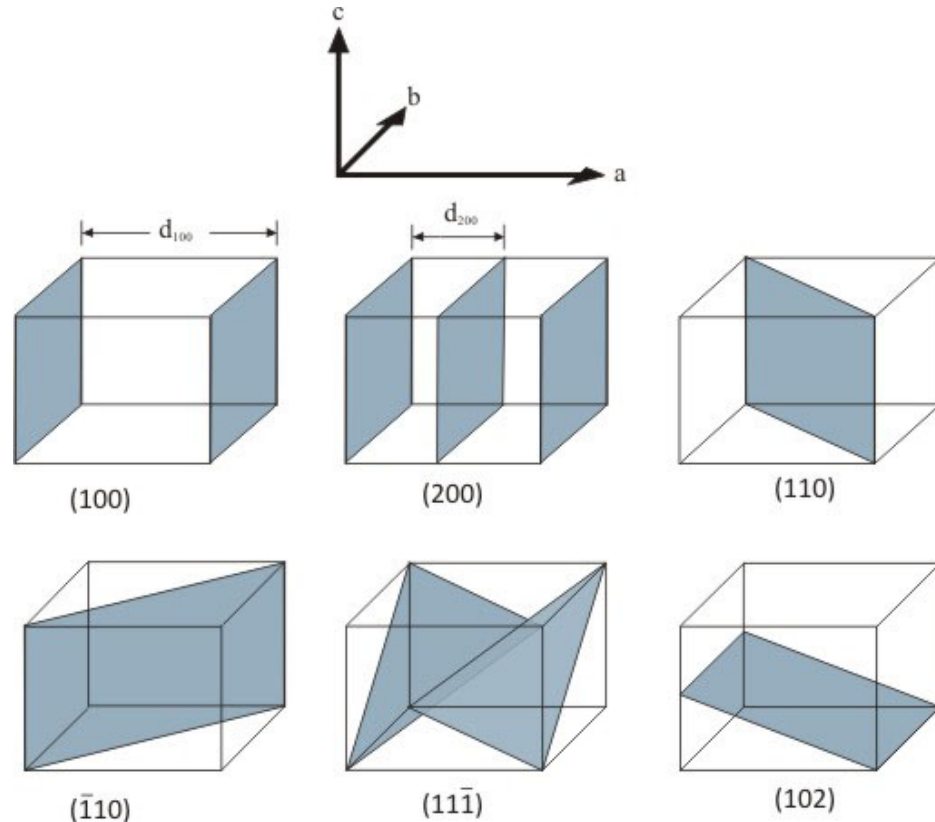


X-rays: short wavelength, high photon energy:

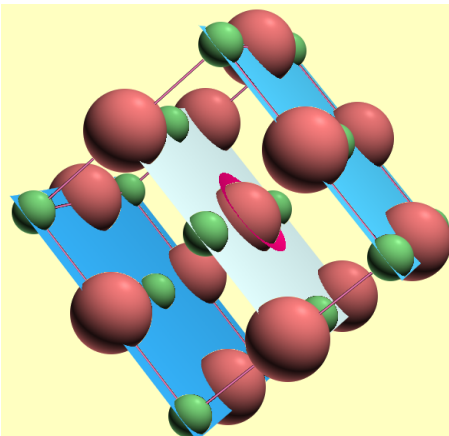
- Short wavelength scatters off atoms and other small things \rightarrow X-ray diffraction (XRD)
- High energy photons ionize inner shell electrons causing elemental fluorescence X-ray \rightarrow X-ray fluorescence (XRF)

XRD Basics: Crystalline structure and Miller Indices

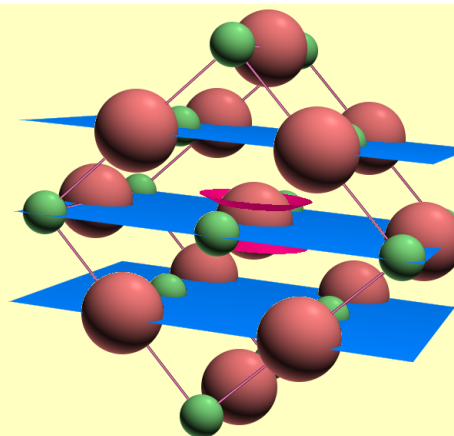
- Any lattice plane can be described by its intersection points with the three unit cell axes
- Miller indices are the reciprocal of the intercepts
 - integers h , k and l refer to reciprocals of intercepts on a , b and c
- Identify planes *adjacent* to origin - planes through the origin cannot be described, as the intercept would be zero
- A plane running parallel to an axis has an intercept of ∞ , this corresponds to a Miller index of 0
- Distance d is the plane spacing



The (200) planes of atoms in NaCl



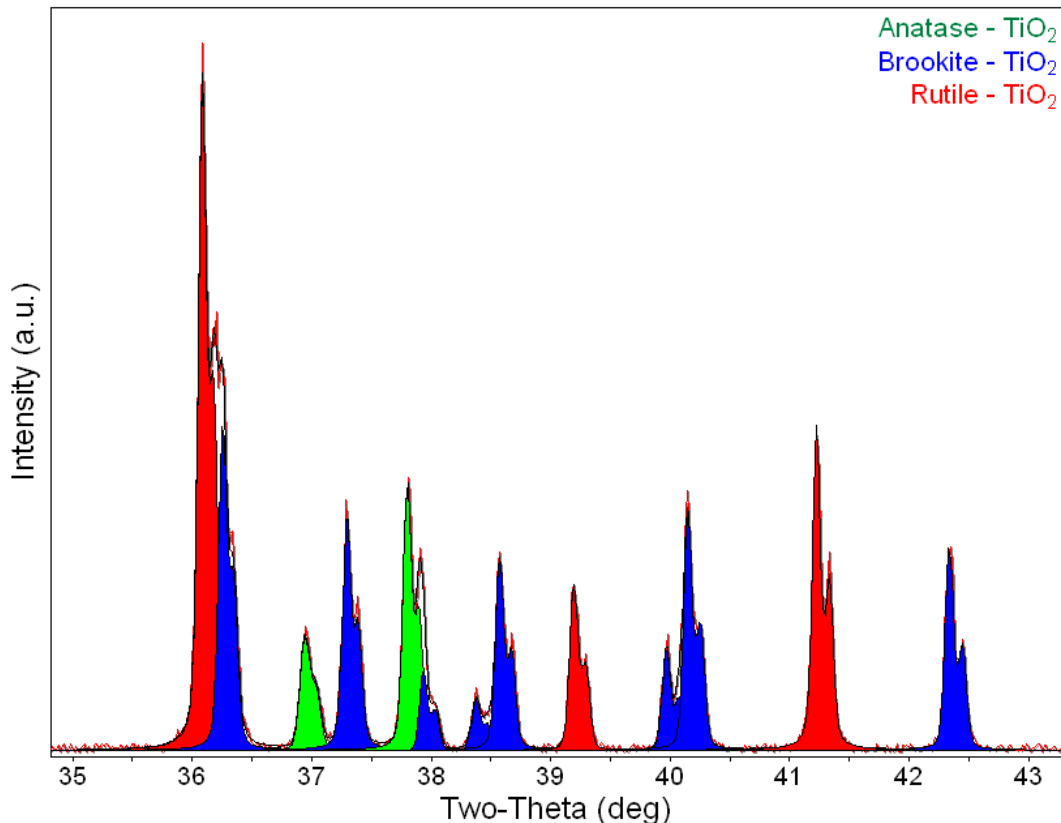
The (220) planes of atoms in NaCl



The atoms in a crystal are a periodic array of coherent scatterers and thus can diffract light.

- Diffraction occurs when each object in a periodic array scatters radiation coherently, producing concerted constructive interference at specific angles.
- The electrons in an atom coherently scatter light.
 - The electrons interact with the oscillating electric field of the light wave.
- Atoms in a crystal form a periodic array of coherent scatterers.
 - The wavelength of X rays are similar to the distance between atoms.
 - Diffraction from different planes of atoms produces a diffraction pattern, which contains information about the atomic arrangement within the crystal
- X Rays are also reflected, scattered incoherently, absorbed, refracted, and transmitted when they interact with matter.

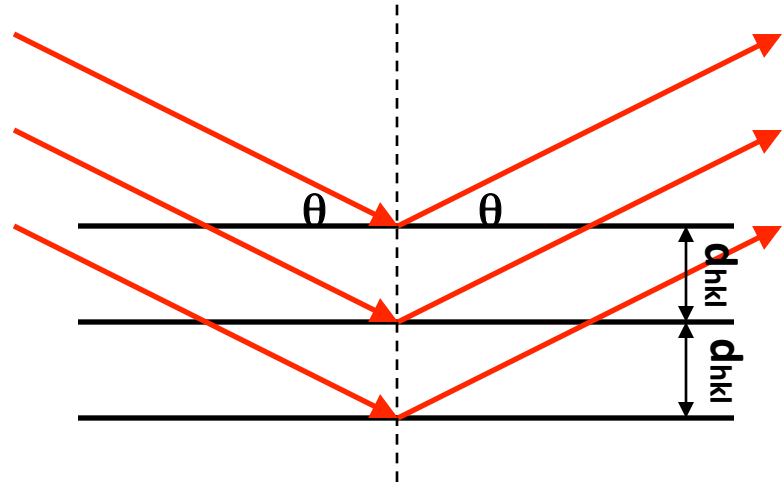
X-Ray Powder Diffraction (XRPD) uses information about the position, intensity, width, and shape of diffraction peaks in a pattern from a polycrystalline sample.



The x-axis, 2theta, corresponds to the angular position of the detector that rotates around the sample.

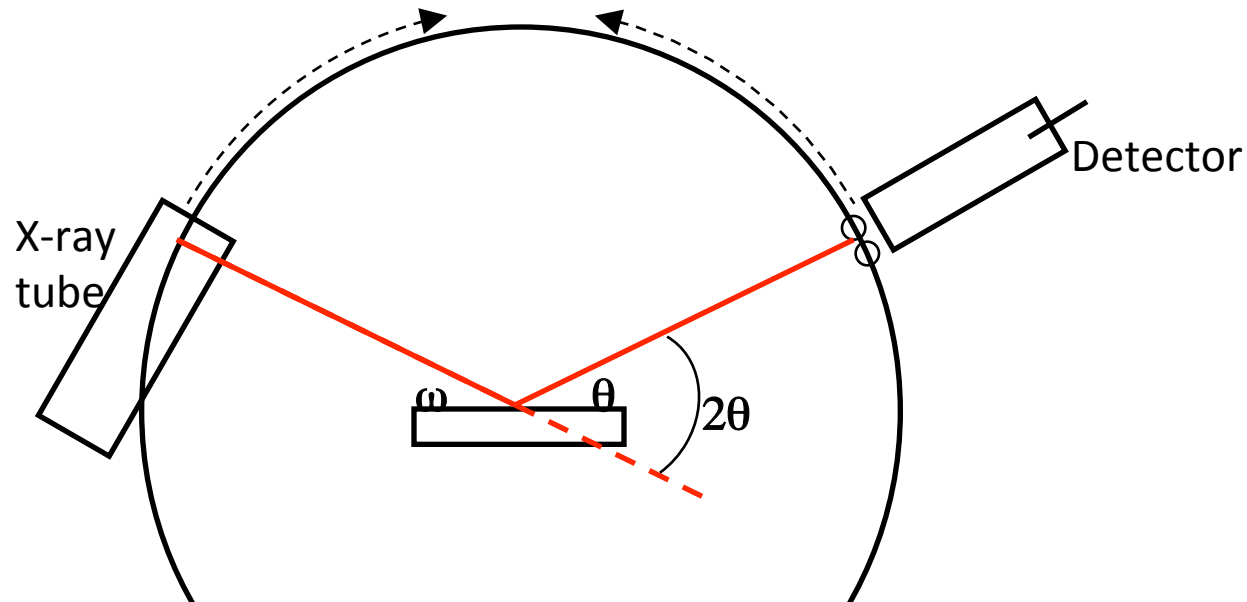
Bragg's law is a simplistic model to understand what conditions are required for diffraction.

$$\lambda = 2d_{hkl} \sin \theta$$



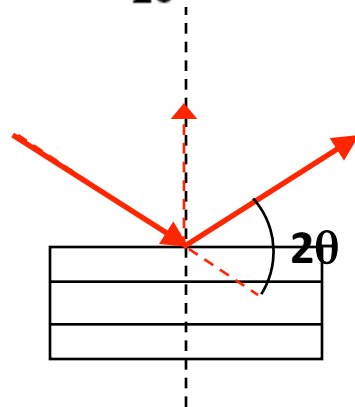
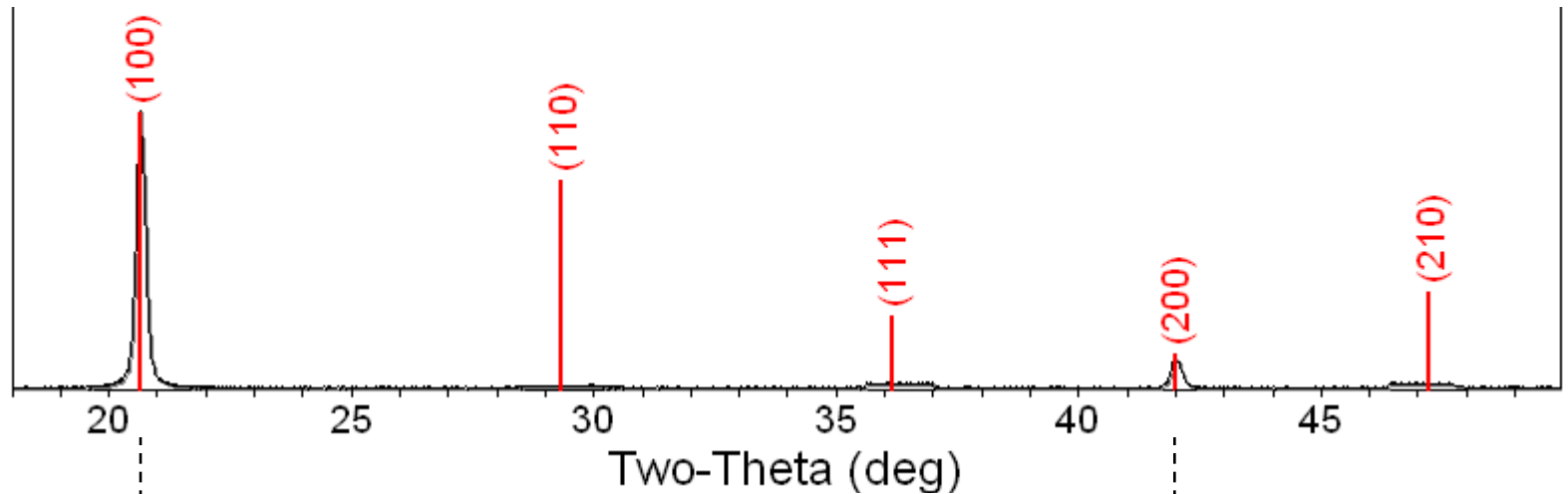
- For parallel planes of atoms, with a space d_{hkl} between the planes, constructive interference only occurs when Bragg's law is satisfied.
 - In our diffractometers, the X-ray wavelength λ is fixed.
 - Consequently, a family of planes produces a diffraction peak only at a specific angle θ .
 - Additionally, the plane normal must be parallel to the diffraction vector
 - Plane normal: the direction perpendicular to a plane of atoms
 - Diffraction vector: the vector that bisects the angle between the incident and diffracted beam
- **The space between diffracting planes of atoms determines peak positions.**
- **The peak intensity is determined by what atoms are in the diffracting plane.**

Powder diffractometers with Bragg-Brentano geometry

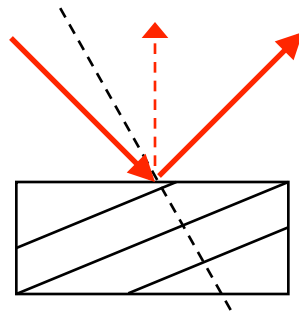


- The incident angle, ω , is defined between the X-ray source and the sample.
- The diffracted angle, 2θ , is defined between the incident beam and the detector angle.
- The incident angle ω is always $\frac{1}{2}$ of the detector angle 2θ .
- In a $\theta:2\theta$ instrument (e.g. Rigaku RU300), the tube is fixed, the sample rotates at θ $^\circ/\text{min}$ and the detector rotates at 2θ $^\circ/\text{min}$.
- In a $\theta:\theta$ instrument (e.g. PANalytical X' Pert Pro), the sample is fixed and the tube rotates at a rate $-\theta$ $^\circ/\text{min}$ and the detector rotates at a rate of θ $^\circ/\text{min}$.

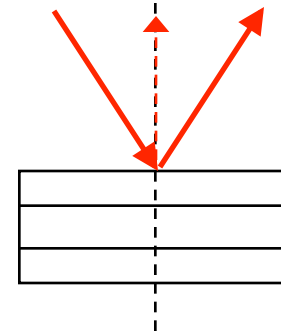
A single crystal specimen in a Bragg-Brentano diffractometer would produce only one family of peaks in the diffraction pattern.



At $20.6^\circ 2\theta$, Bragg's law is fulfilled for the (100) planes, producing a diffraction peak.

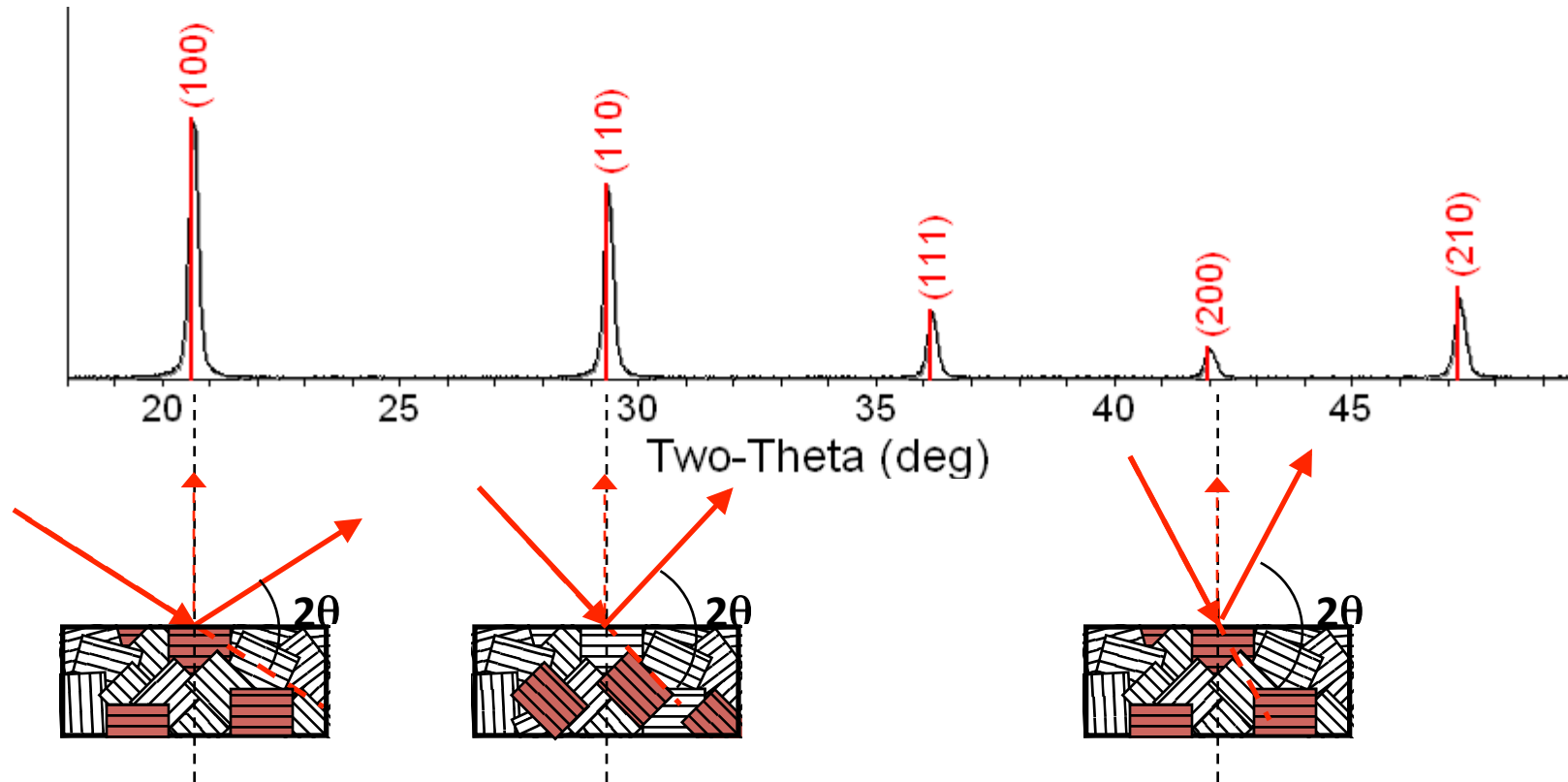


The (110) planes would diffract at $29.3^\circ 2\theta$; however, they are not properly aligned to produce a diffraction peak (the perpendicular to those planes does not bisect the incident and diffracted beams). Only background is observed.



The (200) planes are parallel to the (100) planes. Therefore, they also diffract for this crystal. Since d_{200} is $\frac{1}{2} d_{100}$, they appear at $42^\circ 2\theta$.

A polycrystalline sample should contain thousands of crystallites. Therefore, all possible diffraction peaks should be observed.



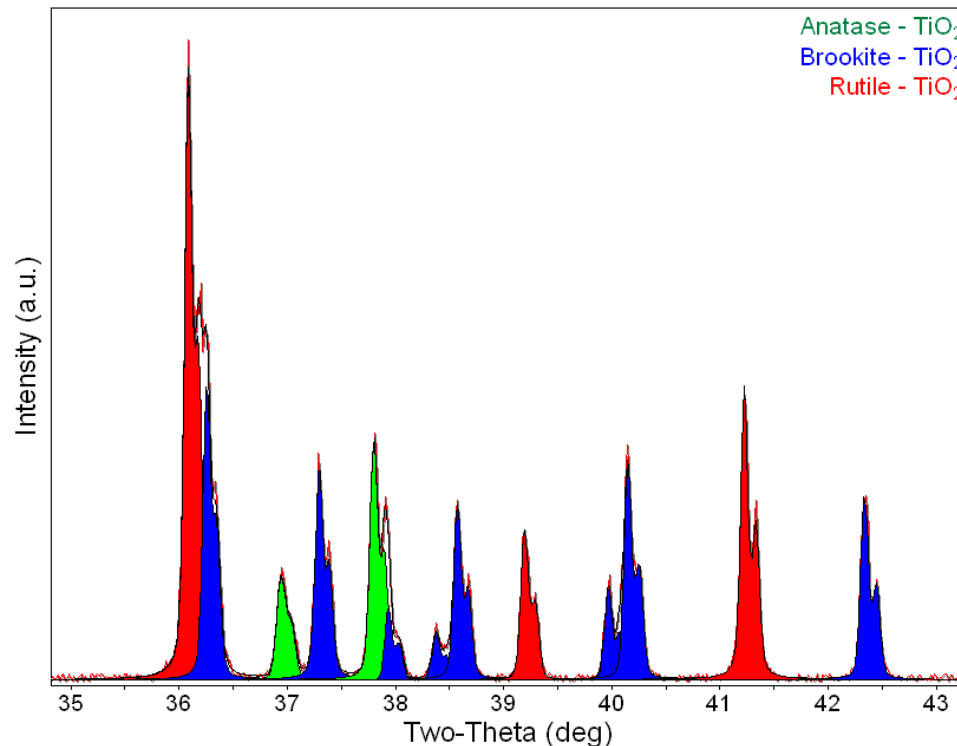
- For every set of planes, there will be a small percentage of crystallites that are properly oriented to diffract (the plane perpendicular bisects the incident and diffracted beams).
- Basic assumptions of powder diffraction are that for every set of planes there is an equal number of crystallites that will diffract and that there is a statistically relevant number of crystallites, not just one or two.

You can use XRD to determine

- Phase Composition of a Sample
 - Quantitative Phase Analysis: determine the relative amounts of phases in a mixture by referencing the relative peak intensities
 - Databases, such as Powder Diffraction File (PDF), contain diffraction pattern information for thousands of crystalline phases
- Unit cell lattice parameters and Bravais lattice symmetry
 - Index peak positions
 - Lattice parameters can vary as a function of, and therefore give you information about, alloying, doping, solid solutions, strains, etc.
- Residual Strain (macrostrain)
- Crystal Structure
 - By Rietveld refinement of the entire diffraction pattern
- Epitaxy/Texture/Orientation
- Crystallite Size and Microstrain
 - Indicated by peak broadening
 - Other defects (stacking faults, etc.) can be measured by analysis of peak shapes and peak width

Phase Identification

- The diffraction pattern for every phase is as unique as your fingerprint
 - Phases with the same chemical composition can have drastically different diffraction patterns.
 - Use the position and relative intensity of a series of peaks to match experimental data to the reference patterns in the database



Databases such as the Powder Diffraction File (PDF) contain dI lists for thousands of crystalline phases.

- The PDF contains over 200,000 diffraction patterns.
- Modern computer programs can help you determine what phases are present in your sample by quickly comparing your diffraction data to all of the patterns in the database.
- The PDF card for an entry contains a lot of useful information, including literature references.

PDF#00-021-1276(RDB): QM=Star(S); d=(Unknown); I=...

Reference Lines(38) Cu 8

Rutile, syn
TiO₂ (White)

Radiation=CuKα1 Lambda=1.54056 Filter=
Calibration=Internal(W) 2T=27.447-155.866 I/Ic(RIR)=3.40
Ref.
Natl. Bur. Stand. (U.S.) Monogr. 25, v7 p83 (1969)

Tetragonal - Powder Diffraction, P4₂/mnm (136) Z=2 mp=
CELL: 4.5933 x 4.5933 x 2.9592 <90.0 x 90.0 x 90.0> P.S=tP6.00
Density(c)=4.25 Density(m)=4.23 Mwt=79.9 Vol=62.43
Ref.
F(30)=107.8(0.008,32/0)

Strong Lines: 3.25/X 1.69/6 2.49/5 2.19/3 1.62/2 1.36/2 0.82/1 1.35/1 (%-Typ

General Comments: Pattern reviewed by Syvinski, W., McCarthy, G., North Dakota State Univ, Fargo, North Dakota, USA, ICDD Grant-in-Aid (1990). Agrees well with experimental and calculated patterns. Additional weak reflections (indicated by brackets) were observed. Naturally occurring material may be reddish brown. Additional Patterns: Validated

PDF#00-021-1276(RDB): QM=Star(S); d=(Unknown); I=...

Reference Lines(38) Cu 8

| # | 2-Theta | d(Å) | I(f) | [h k l] | Theta | 1/(2d) | 2pi/d | n^2 |
|----|---------|--------|-------|---------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| 1 | 27.447 | 3.2470 | 100.0 | [1 1 0] | 13.723 | 0.1540 | 1.9351 | |
| 2 | 36.086 | 2.4870 | 50.0 | [1 0 1] | 18.043 | 0.2010 | 2.5264 | |
| 3 | 39.187 | 2.2970 | 8.0 | [2 0 0] | 19.594 | 0.2177 | 2.7354 | |
| 4 | 41.226 | 2.1880 | 25.0 | [1 1 1] | 20.613 | 0.2285 | 2.8717 | |
| 5 | 44.051 | 2.0540 | 10.0 | [2 1 0] | 22.026 | 0.2434 | 3.0590 | |
| 6 | 54.323 | 1.6874 | 60.0 | [2 1 1] | 27.161 | 0.2963 | 3.7236 | |
| 7 | 56.642 | 1.6237 | 20.0 | [2 2 0] | 28.321 | 0.3079 | 3.8697 | |
| 8 | 62.742 | 1.4797 | 10.0 | [0 0 2] | 31.371 | 0.3379 | 4.2463 | |
| 9 | 64.040 | 1.4528 | 10.0 | [3 1 0] | 32.020 | 0.3442 | 4.3249 | |
| 10 | 65.479 | 1.4243 | 2.0 | [2 2 1] | 32.740 | 0.3510 | 4.4114 | |
| 11 | 69.010 | 1.3598 | 20.0 | [3 0 1] | 34.505 | 0.3677 | 4.6207 | |
| 12 | 69.790 | 1.3465 | 12.0 | [1 1 2] | 34.895 | 0.3713 | 4.6663 | |
| 13 | 72.409 | 1.3041 | 2.0 | [3 1 1] | 36.205 | 0.3834 | 4.8180 | |
| 14 | 74.411 | 1.2739 | 1.0 | [3 2 0] | 37.205 | 0.3925 | 4.9322 | |
| 15 | 76.509 | 1.2441 | 4.0 | [2 0 2] | 38.255 | 0.4019 | 5.0504 | |
| 16 | 79.821 | 1.2006 | 2.0 | [2 1 2] | 39.911 | 0.4165 | 5.2334 | |
| 17 | 82.334 | 1.1702 | 6.0 | [3 2 1] | 41.167 | 0.4273 | 5.3693 | |
| 18 | 84.260 | 1.1483 | 4.0 | [4 0 0] | 42.130 | 0.4354 | 5.4717 | |
| 19 | 87.463 | 1.1143 | 2.0 | [4 1 0] | 43.732 | 0.4487 | 5.6387 | |

XRD Basics: Phase Identification/ Whole profile fitting

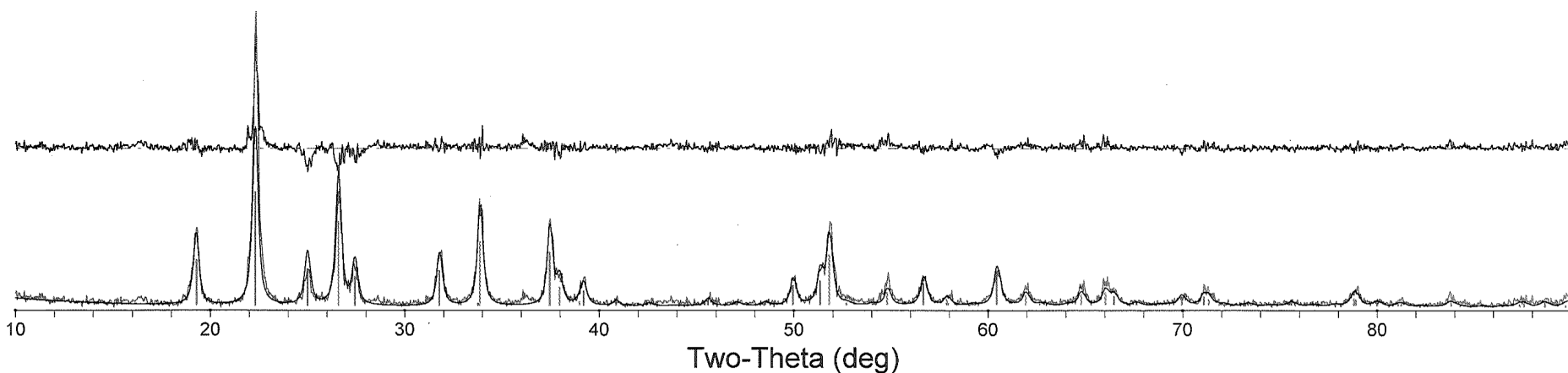
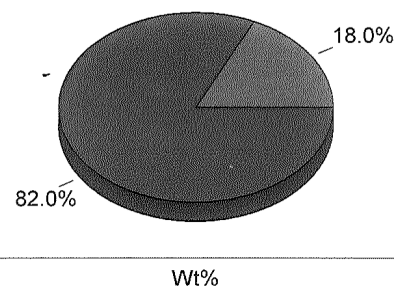
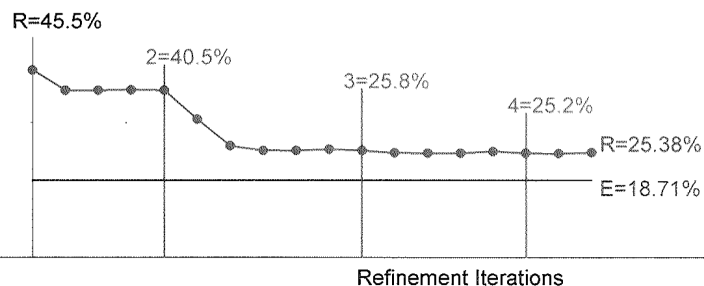
Phase ID (2)

■ Cassiterite - SnO_2

■ Tin Phosphate - SnP_2O_7

| Source | I/Ic | Wt% | #L |
|--|----------|------------|----|
| PDF#00-041-1445 | 4.90(5%) | 18.0 (1.2) | 22 |
| PDF#00-029-1352 | 1.50(5%) | 82.0 (5.6) | 42 |
| XRF(Wt%): SnO_2 =60.2%, P_2O_5 =39.8% | | | |

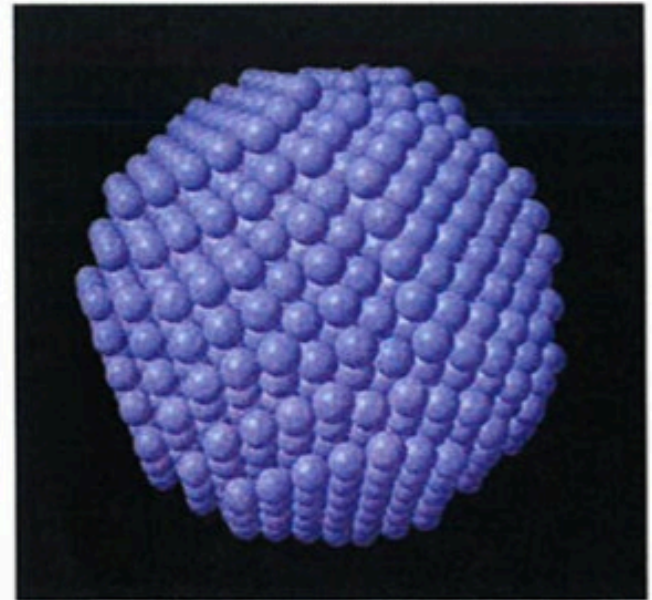
NOTE: Fitting Halted at Iteration 18(4): $R=25.38\%$ ($E=18.71\%$, $R/E=1.36$, $P=17$, $\text{EPS}=0.5$)



- 18% unreacted SnO_2 in synthesis of SnP_2O_7
- Phase composition determined from Relative Intensity Ratio (RIR)
- Primary diffraction peak of "phase" relative to primary diffraction peak of Al_2O_3 in 1:1 mass ratio mixture

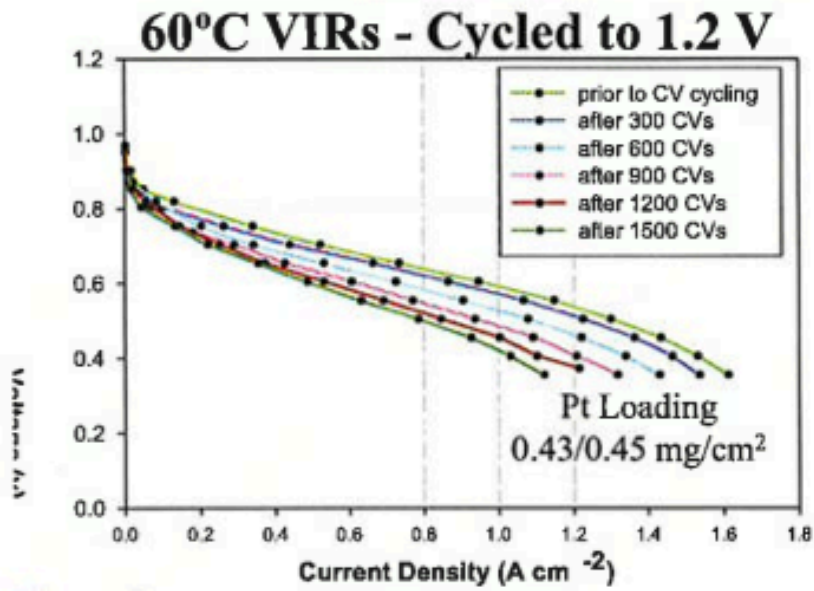
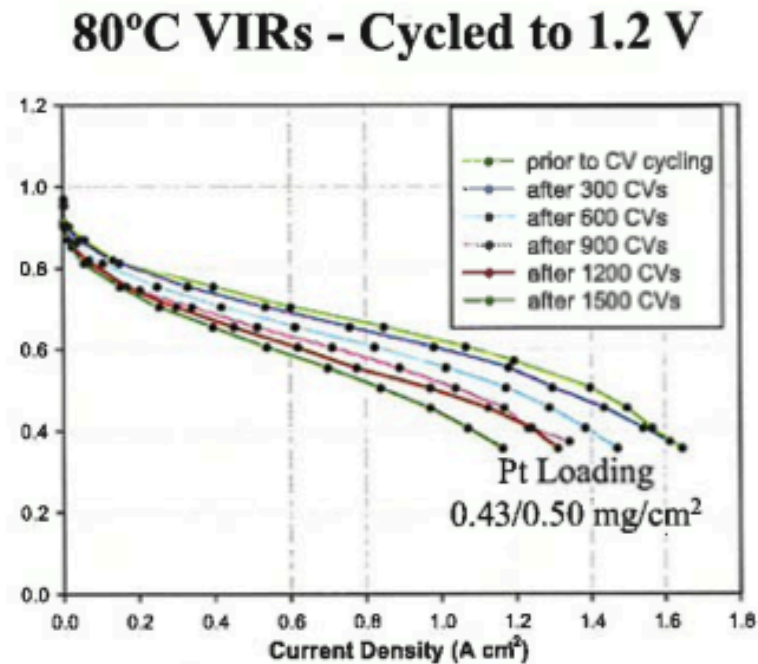
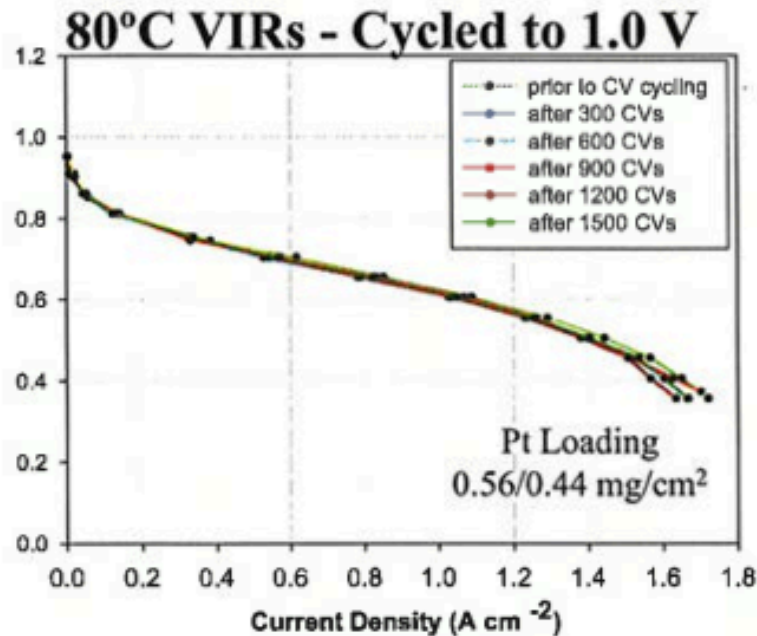
XRD Example: Identifying Pt coarsening

- Catalyst as received from manufacturers in a variety of states:
 - Pt on carbon usually very crystalline
 - Pt alloys e.g. PtRu, Pt₃Cr, PtCo may mixtures of alloys, unalloyed metals, and oxides/hydroxides
- Pt alloy composition and crystallinity may change with fuel cell operation
- Past research indicates Pt catalysts will also coarsen and lose surface area under steady state PEFC operation
 - Wilson et al J. Electrochem. Soc V140 10. 1993



Pt small crystal model

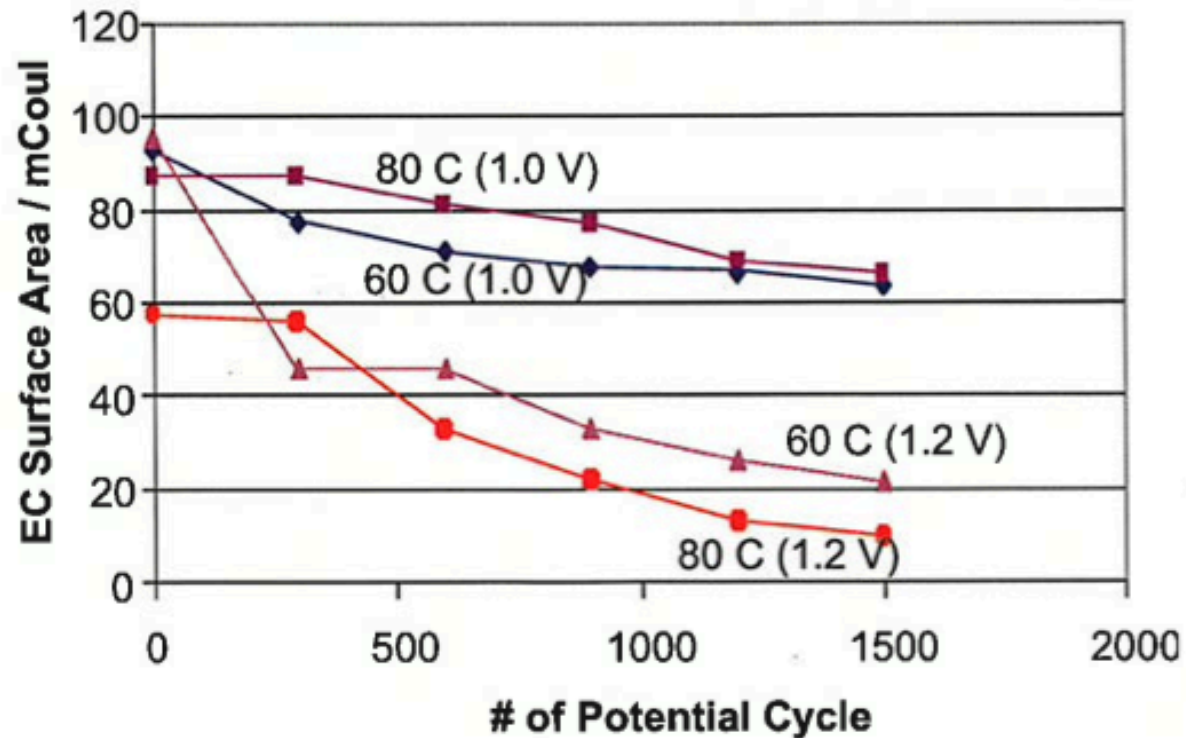
XRD Example: Identifying Pt coarsening



- Small degradation at 1.0 V cycling
- Large degradation at 1.2 V cycling
- Only 80 hrs of fuel cell operation

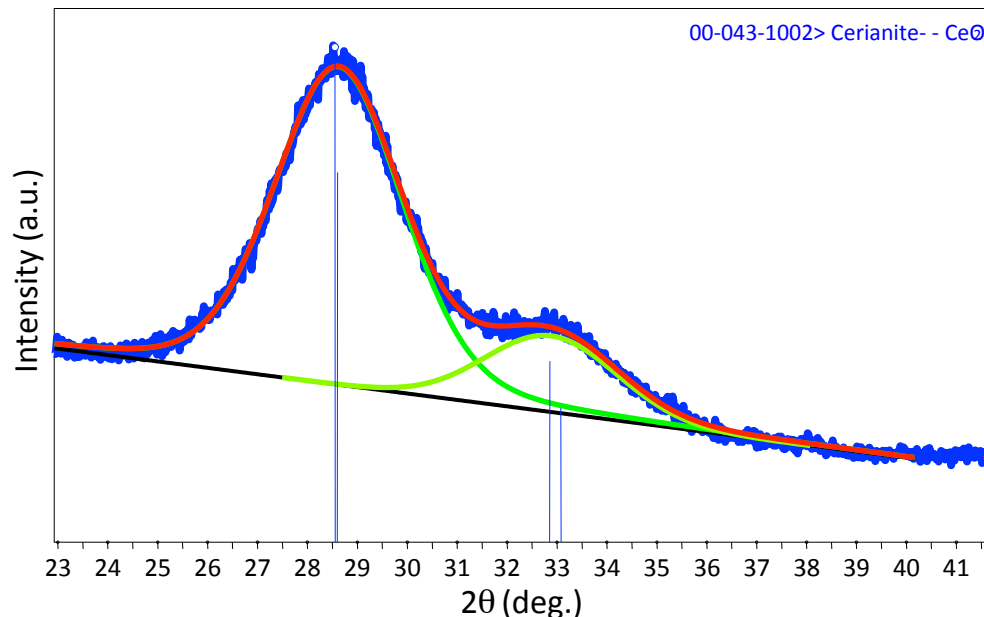
XRD Example: Identifying Pt coarsening

- No net mass loss of catalyst
 - Total loadings the same before and after cycling confirmed by XRF
- Catalyst particle growth?



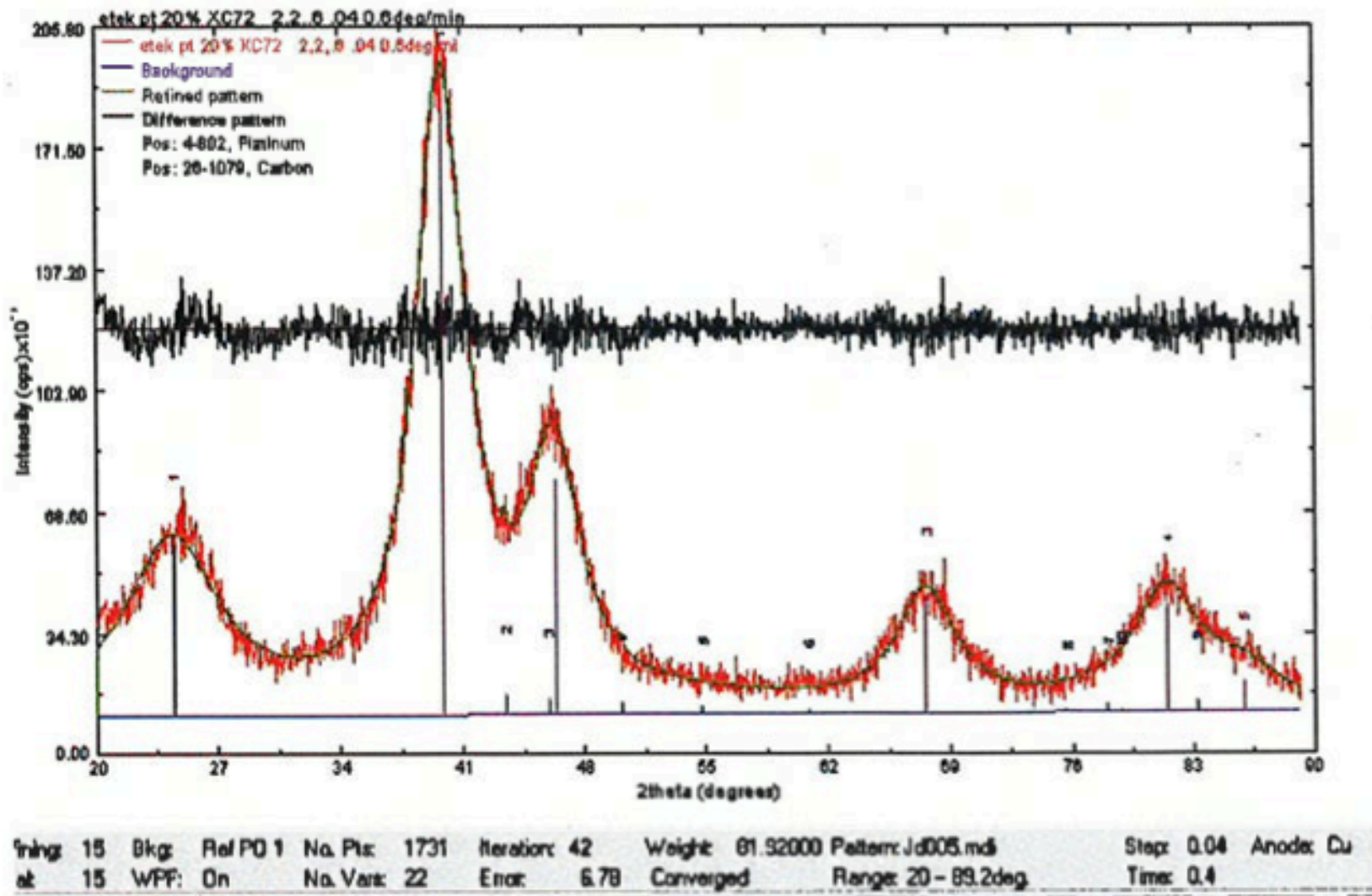
Crystallite Size and Microstrain

- Crystallites smaller than ~120nm create broadening of diffraction peaks
 - this peak broadening can be used to quantify the average crystallite size of nanoparticles using the Scherrer equation
 - must know the contribution of peak width from the instrument by using a calibration curve
- microstrain may also create peak broadening
 - analyzing the peak widths over a long range of 2theta using a Williamson-Hull plot can let you separate microstrain and crystallite size



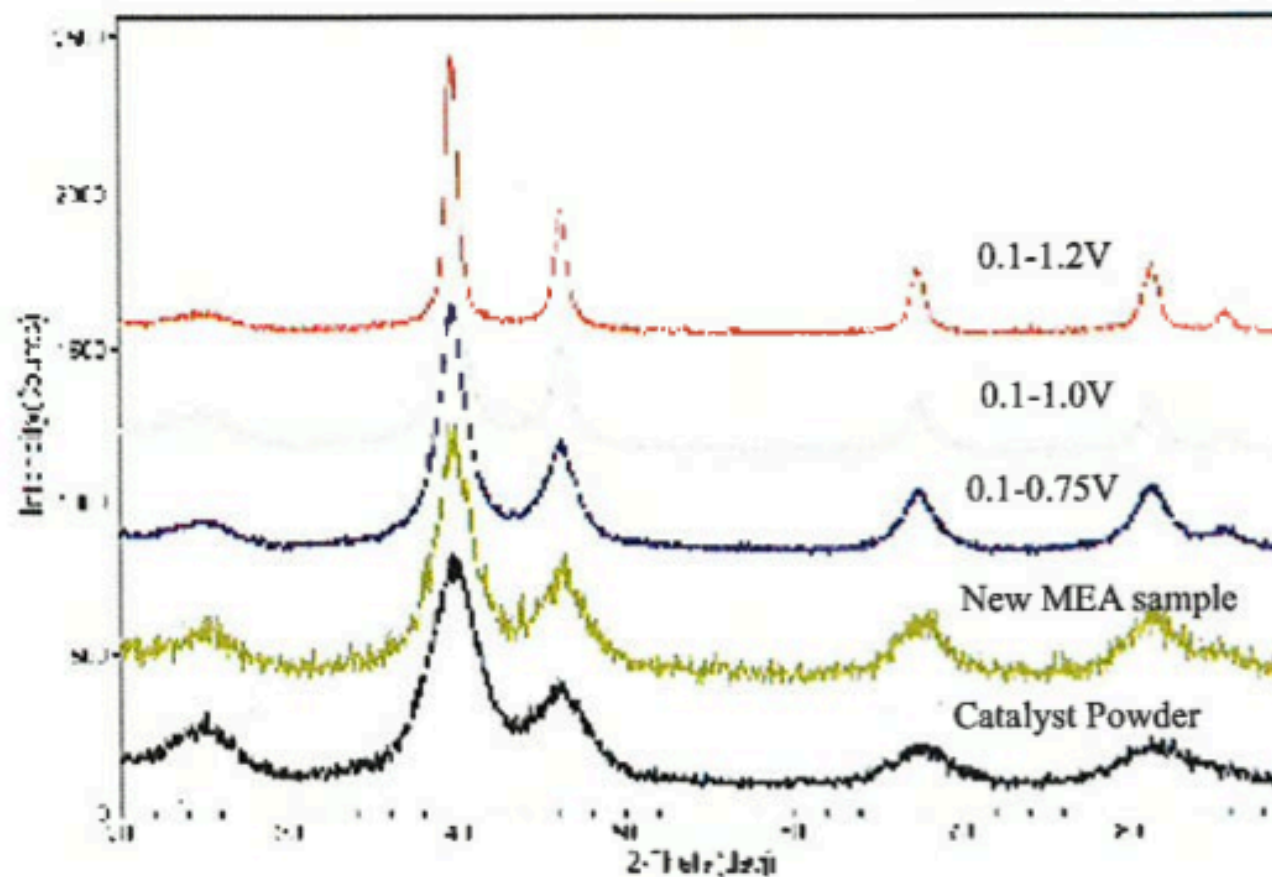
$$B(2\theta) = \frac{K\lambda}{L \cos \theta}$$

XRD Example: Identifying Pt coarsening



- ETEK Pt 20% -C sample ~ 20 Å vol weighted size
- $a = 3.9261 (0.00068) \text{ Å}$

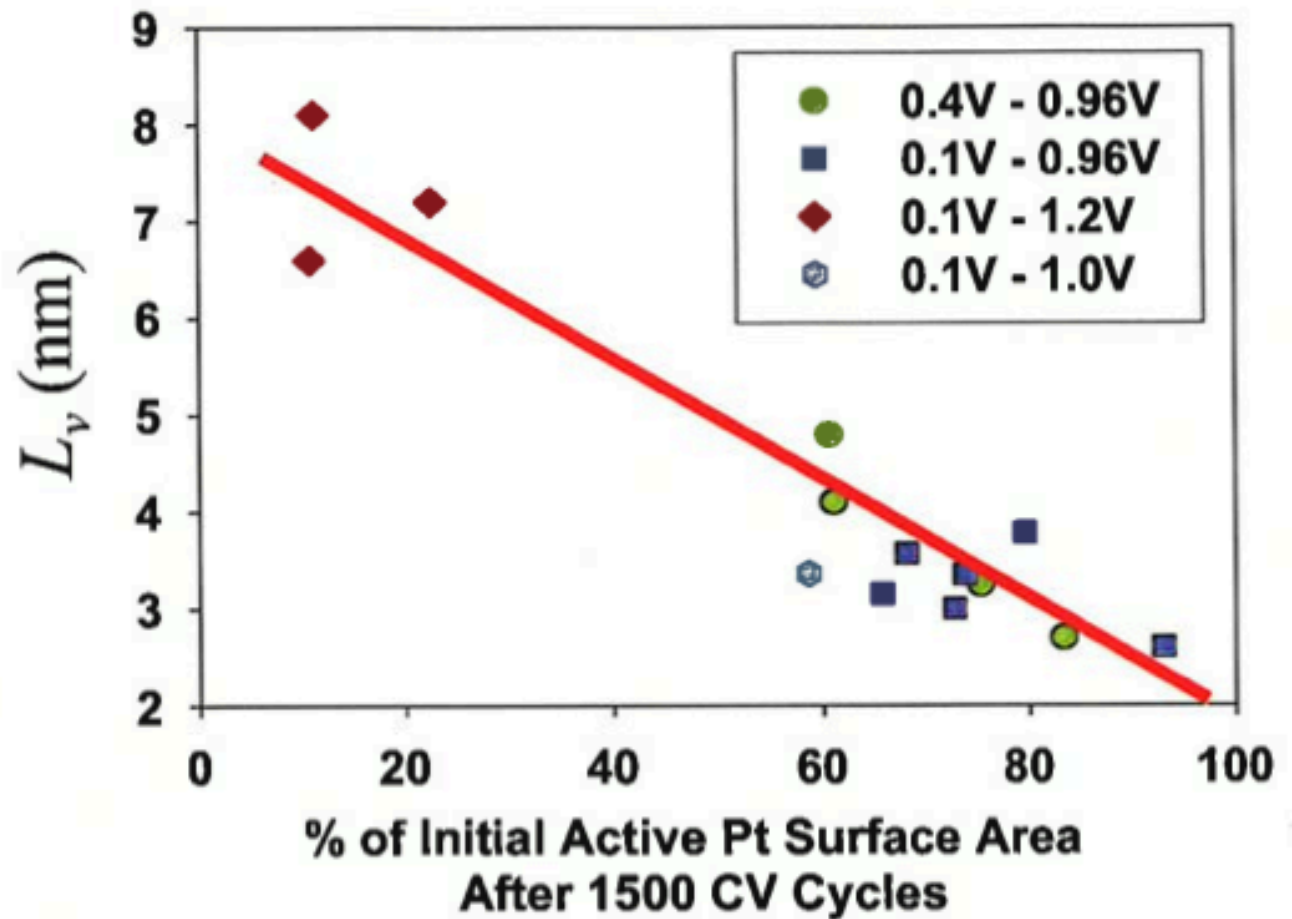
XRD Example: Identifying Pt coarsening



- All cathodes catalysts coarsened
- Particle size growth increases with maximum cycling potentials

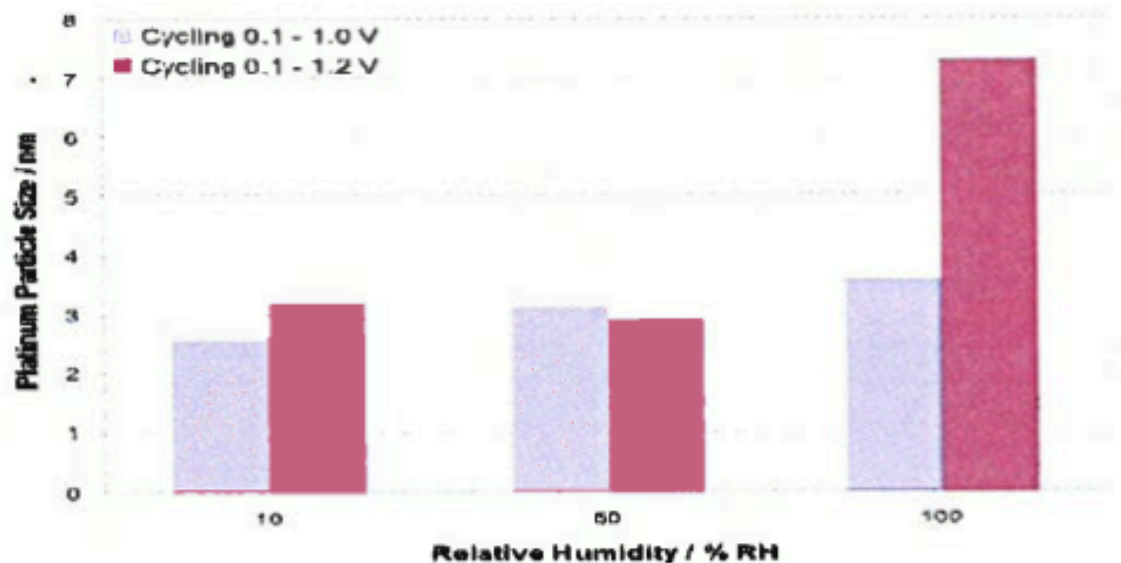
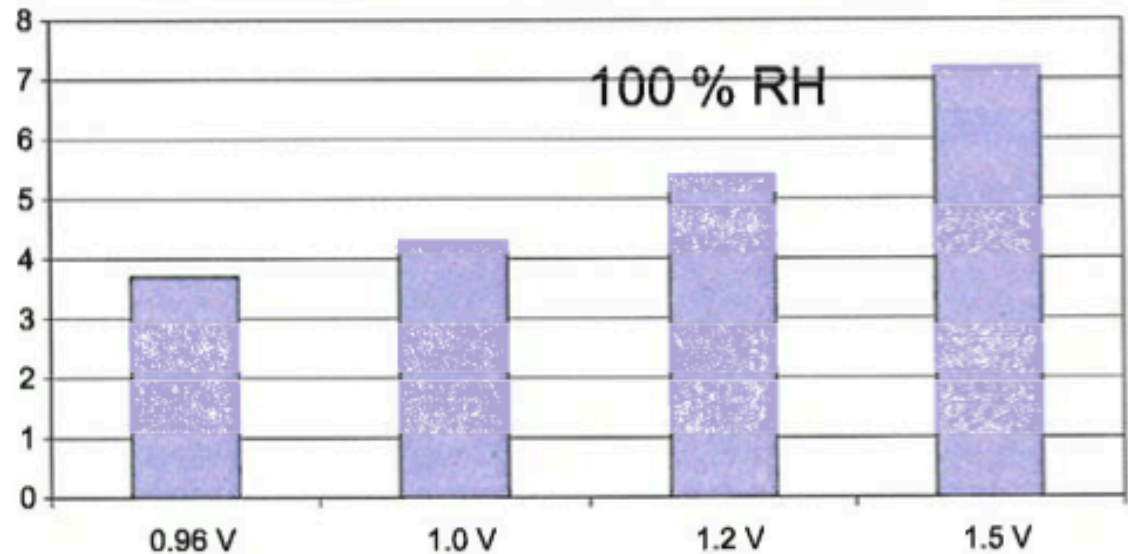
XRD Example: Identifying Pt coarsening

Cell 80 °C
H₂ 226% RH
Air 100% RH



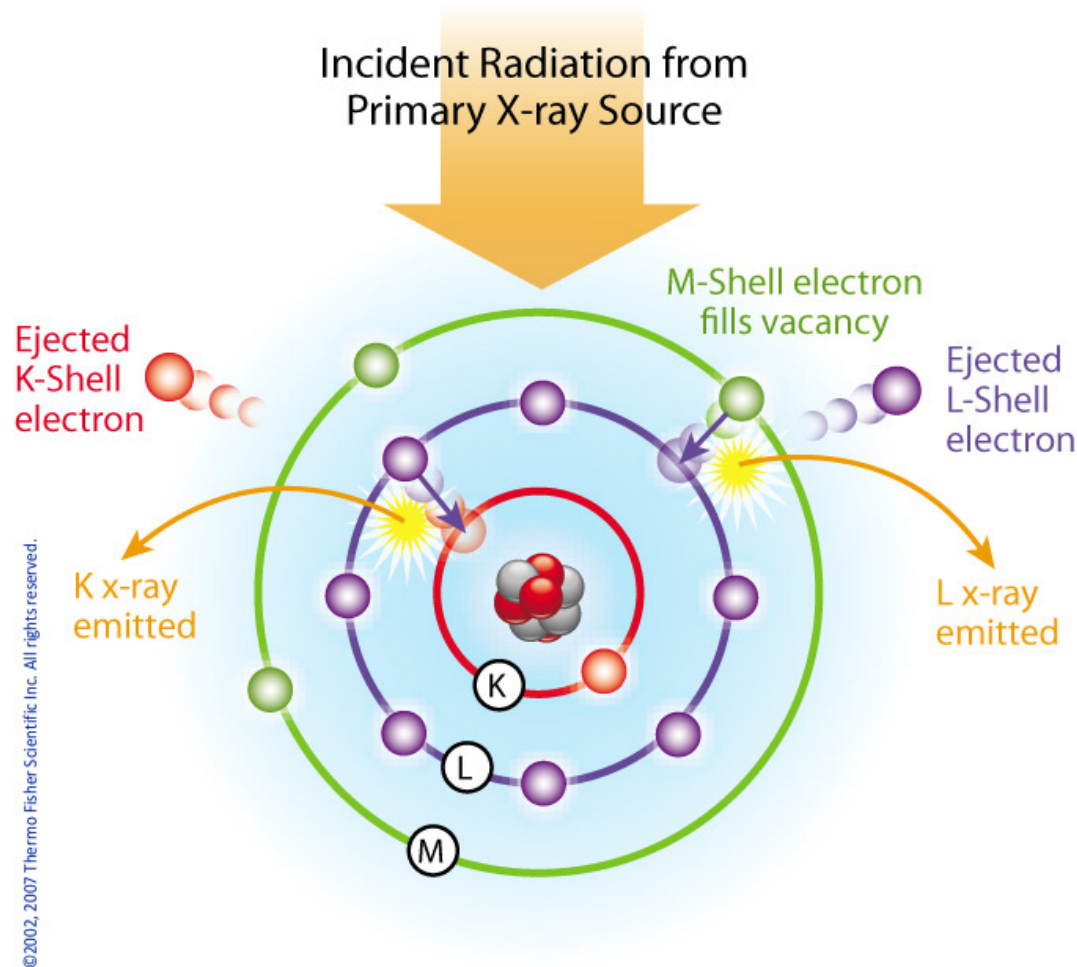
XRD Example: Identifying Pt coarsening

- Strongly correlated to max cycling voltage (80°C)
- Dry cell conditions decrease growth



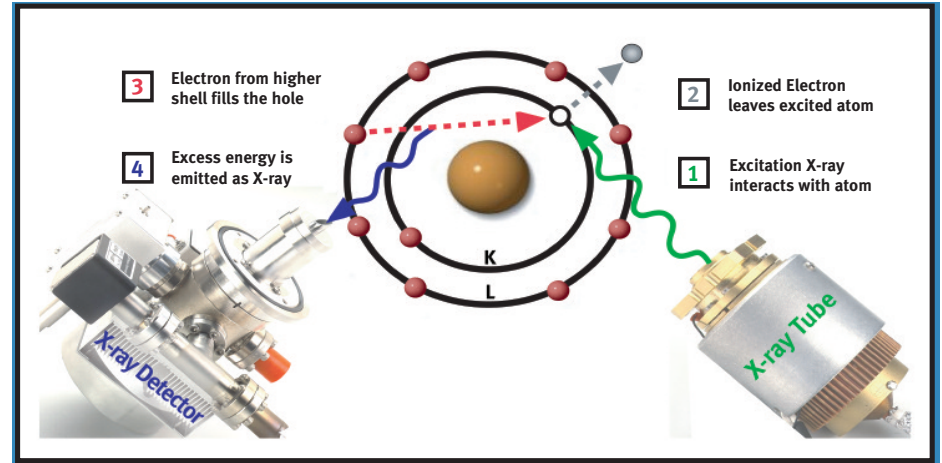
XRF: Principle of operation

- A fluorescent x-ray is created when an x-ray of sufficient energy strikes an atom in the sample, dislodging an electron from one of the atom's inner orbital shells.
- The atom regains stability, filling the vacancy left in the inner orbital shell with an electron from one of the atom's higher energy orbital shells.
- The electron drops to the lower energy state by releasing a fluorescent x-ray, and the energy of this x-ray is equal to the specific difference in energy between two quantum states of the electron.

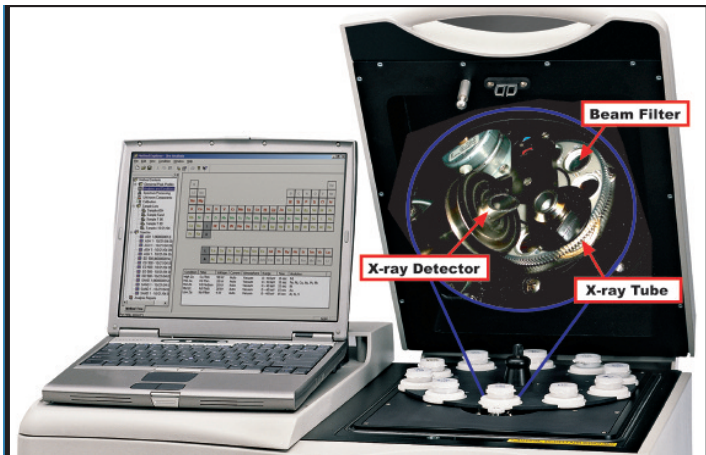


XRF: Capabilities and Considerations

- Elemental Identification: The energy difference between two specific orbital shells in a given element is always the same. The photon emitted when an electron moves between these two levels, will always have the same energy.
- Intensity at given energy (counts per second) is proportional to concentration of element in measured sample.
- There must be a significant source peak above absorption edge energy of the element of interest.

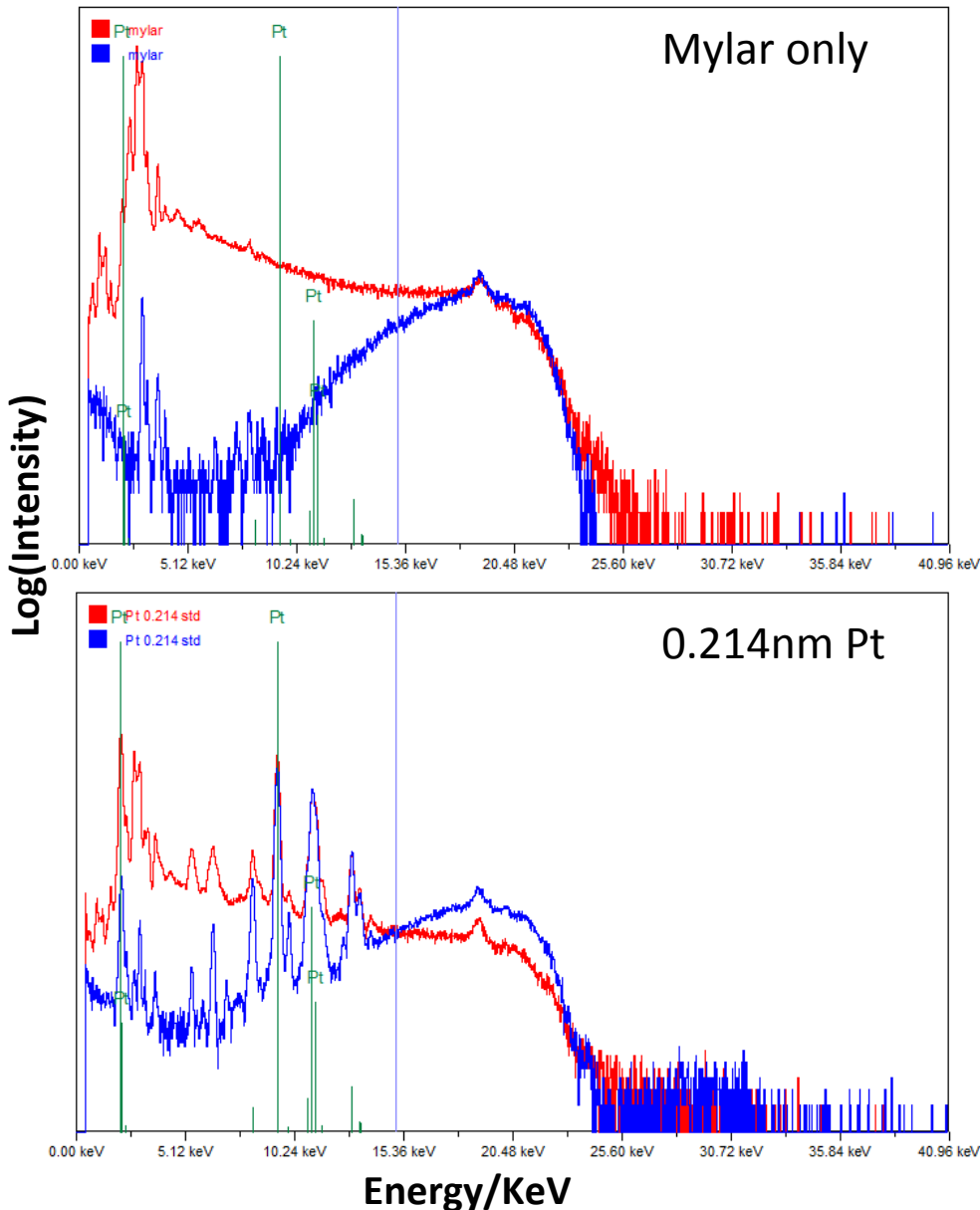


- Nondestructive
- Sensitivity to ppm ($\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$)
- Spatial resolution with mapping stage
- Analysis of unknowns (qual or quant)
- Quantitative analysis through use of Fundamental Parameters Model with standards
 - Composition/loading
 - Multi-layer composition/thickness



XRF Example: Defining Acquisition Parameters

— no filter — Thin Pd filter



User defined settings:

Filter: modifies shape of source spectrum and improves S/N around region of interest

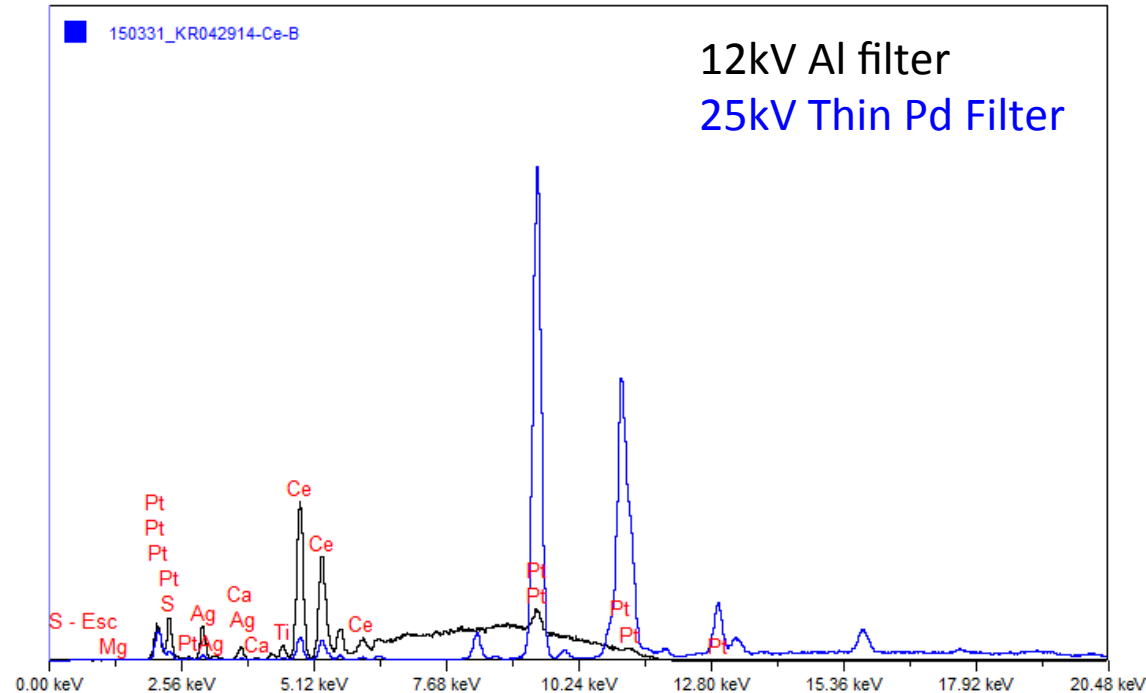
Optimal voltage: usually 1.5–2 times the absorption edge energy of the highest energy element of interest

Current: Maximize count rates relative to detector deadtime (interval during which detector is processing prior signal— subsequent photons entering detector are not counted).

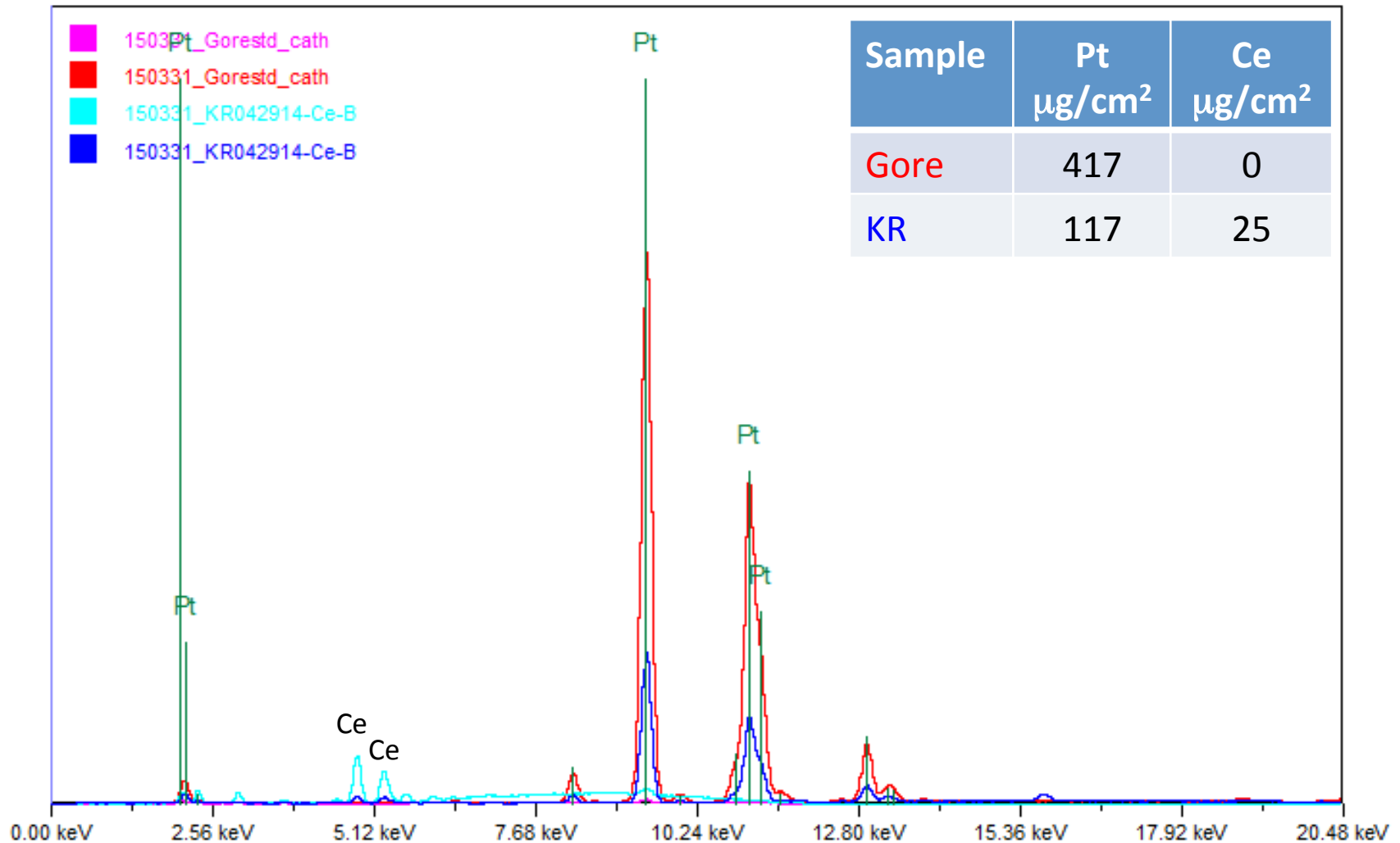
Collection time:
10,000 counts/ROI \approx 1% error

XRF Example: Measuring Pt and Ce loading with fundamental parameters model

1. Create model using known standards
 - CeO_2 bulk powder
 - 0.214nm Pt thin film
2. Record calibration spectra of known standards under Filter/Voltage setting optimized for each element of interest. This provides relationship between measured intensity and composition of a given element.
3. Record spectra of unknown. FP model will use spectra recorded under optimized conditions for each element.
4. FP model uses iterative regression to calculate composition of unknown based on measured intensities.



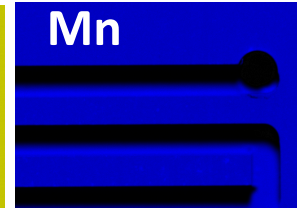
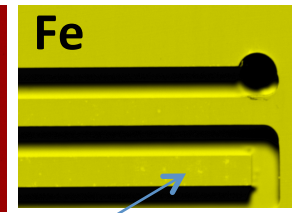
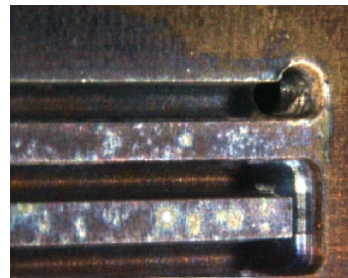
XRF Example: Analyzing Pt and Ce loading of two unknowns



XRF Example: Evaluation of novel bipolar plates

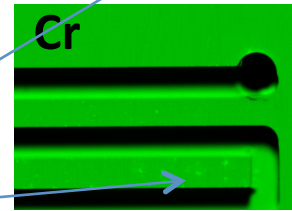
Elemental mapping of anode plate after testing

Optical Image



Ti loss

Higher concentration of Fe/Cr due to loss of Ti in outer layer



- Novel bi-polar plates examined by XRF before and after FC testing

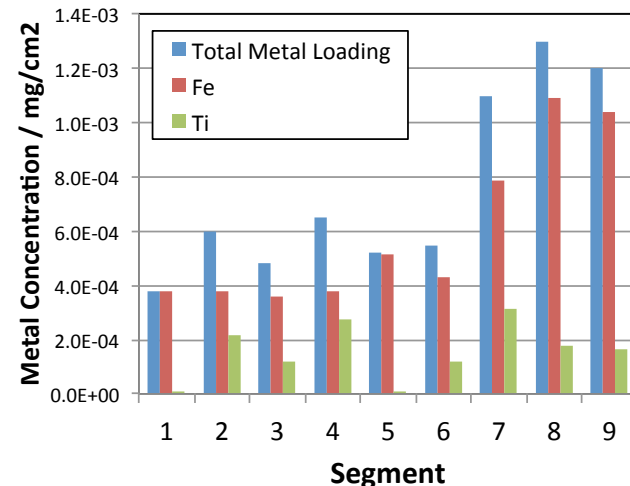
- Analyses of bi-polar plates (post test):

- Indicates corrosion present on anode plate, typically where large amounts of liquid water is present
- Minimal corrosion present on cathode plate (but not zero)

- Analysis of MEAs show:

- Small metal contamination of GDL/MEA
- Higher concentrations at outlet where corrosion was evident.

Quantitative composition of MEA



References

- Dr. Scott Speakman
 - <http://prism.mit.edu/xray>
- P. Palmer
 - <http://www.asdlib.org/onlineArticles/ecourseware/Palmer/>
- <http://www.amptek.com/xrf/>
- B.L. Henke, X-ray interactions with matter
 - http://henke.lbl.gov/optical_constants/
- Data shown in presentation sourced from: F. Garzon, M. Wilson, T. Rockward, and K. Rau

Thank You

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