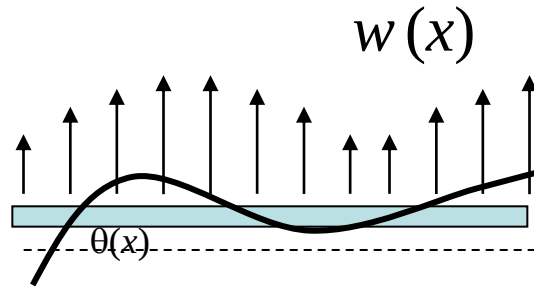


Beam Deflections: Minimum Potential Energy

Potential Energy in a bending beam under a load $w(x)$

$$V[u] = \int_0^{L_0} \frac{1}{2} EI (\kappa(x))^2 dx - \int_0^{L_0} w(x)u(x)dx$$



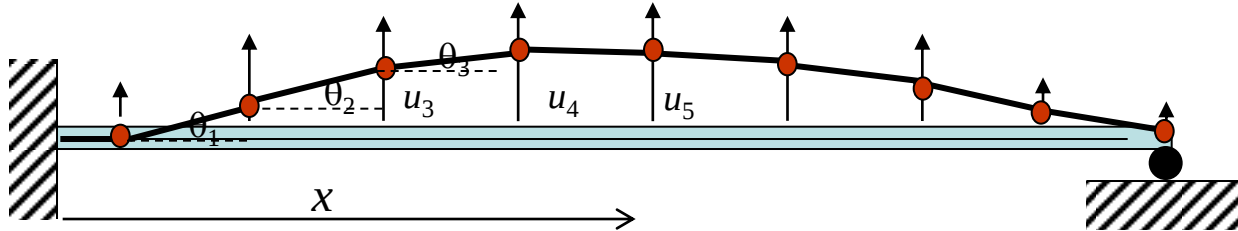
Where κ is the beam curvature:

$$\kappa = \frac{d\theta}{ds} \quad \theta = \tan^{-1} \frac{du}{ds}.$$

$$\text{For } \left| \frac{du}{ds} \right| \ll 1, \quad s \approx x, \quad \theta \approx \frac{du}{dx} \quad \text{and} \quad \kappa \approx \frac{d^2u}{dx^2}$$

Excel

- Divide the beam into N segments, each of length $s=L_0/N$



- Beam deflections are defined by the orientation angles θ_i :

$$x_1 = s \cos \theta_0, \quad x_2 = x_1 + s \cos \theta_1 \quad \dots \quad x_i = x_{i-1} + s \cos \theta_{i-1}$$

$$u_1 = s \sin \theta_0, \quad u_2 = u_1 + s \sin \theta_1 \quad \dots \quad u_i = u_{i-1} + s \sin \theta_{i-1}$$

- Curvature is $\kappa = d\theta / ds$

- For the i^{th} segment, the curvature is $\kappa_i = (\theta_i - \theta_{i-1})/s$

- Elastic energy for a segment is $V_i = \frac{s}{2} EI \kappa_i^2$

- Load is $W_i = w(x_i)s$ ($i=1,2,\dots,N-1$), $W_0 = w(0)s/2$, $W_N = w(L_0)s/2$

- Total energy is $V = \frac{1}{2} EI s \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{(\theta_i - \theta_{i-1})^2}{s^2} - \sum_{i=0}^N W_i u_i$

- Minimize V , varying the angles θ_i , subject to any constraints from the BC. Here, $u_0=0$ $u_N=0$. $\theta_0=0$

