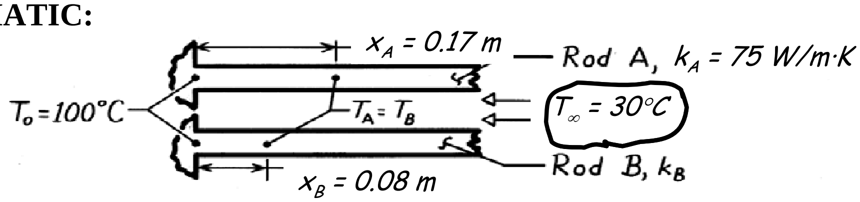
PROBLEM 3.139

KNOWN: Positions of equal temperature on two long rods of the same diameter, but different thermal conductivity, which are exposed to the same base temperature and ambient air conditions.

FIND: Thermal conductivity of rod B, k_B.

SCHEMATIC:



ASSUMPTIONS: (1) Steady-state conditions, (2) Rods are infinitely long fins of uniform cross-sectional area, (3) Uniform heat transfer coefficient, (4) Constant properties.

ANALYSIS: The temperature distribution for the infinite fin has the form

$$\frac{\theta}{\theta_b} = \frac{T(x) - T_\infty}{T_o - T_\infty} = e^{-mx} \qquad m = \left[\frac{hP}{kA_c}\right]^{1/2}. \tag{1,2}$$

For the two positions prescribed, x_A and x_B, it was observed that

$$T_A(x_A) = T_B(x_B) \qquad \text{or} \qquad \theta_A(x_A) = \theta_B(x_B). \tag{3}$$

Since θ_b is identical for both rods, Eq. (1) with the equality of Eq. (3) requires that

$$m_A x_A = m_B x_B$$

Substituting for m from Eq. (2) gives

$$\left[\frac{hP}{k_A A_c}\right]^{1/2} x_A = \left[\frac{hP}{k_B A_c}\right]^{1/2} x_B.$$

Recognizing that h, P and A_c are identical for each rod and rearranging,

$$k_B = \left[\frac{x_B}{x_A}\right]^2 k_A$$

$$k_B = \left[\frac{0.08\text{m}}{0.17\text{m}}\right]^2 \times 75\ \text{W/m}\cdot\text{K} = 16.6\ \text{W/m}\cdot\text{K}.$$ <

COMMENTS: This approach has been used as a method for determining the thermal conductivity. It has the attractive feature of not requiring power or temperature measurements, assuming of course, a reference material of known thermal conductivity is available.