In this study, different career exploration assessment procedures, adapted to childhood, adolescence and adulthood, are presented and discussed, taking in account theoretical and empirical developments of the topic. The first section presents the Use of the Career Development Inventory (Gardner & Taveira, 2000), the use of the Career Development Inventory-Short Form (Gardner & Taveira, 2000) and the Self Exploration Guided Task (Araújo, Taveira, & Lemos, 2004; adapted from Gardner, 1968). The second procedure, designed to assess the career exploration process assessment of adolescents aged 14 years-old through adulthood, involves the use of the Career Exploration Survey (Taveira, 1997; adapted from Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983). The last procedure, developed for adults, include the use of the Career Repertory Grid (Silva & Taveira, 2005) and the Career Narrative for adults with low levels of schooling (RVCAP AEP, 2005; Gonçalves, Taveira, & Pereira, 2007). The benefits and qualities of each procedure are discussed. The authors conclude on the need for longitudinal career exploration assessment plans.

Introduction:
Career exploration is an important kind of vocational behavior that includes learning about the self and from the environment to help decide about a career direction, to ease adjustment to work, and to enhance performance (Blustein, 1992; Jordan, 1963; Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1983). In contrast to theoretical perspectives that have considered exploration to be a stage in career development (e.g., Ginberg, Ginzburg, Axelrod, & Hema, 1951; Super, 1957; Gottfredson, 1981) that propose childhood as a specific developmental stage

A semi-structured interview

- Individual administration to the child by a psychologist
- Administration: 30 minutes

Self Exploration Guided Task (Araújo, Taveira & Lemos, 2004; adapted from Gontun, 1969): self-exploration measure that provides children's self-description and personality

- Semi-structured interview
- Open question: “Who are you? What are you?”
- Individual completion by the child for a psychologist
- Administration: 10 minutes

Career Exploration Survey (CES; Stumpf, Colarelli, & Hartman, 1951, 1957): reflects a complex hierarchical model of the career exploration process, system (includes cognitive, behavioral and affective dimensions of the construct. Consists of four measures of childhood career exploration process (self-awareness, environmental exploration, intensive systematic exploration, and evaluation of interest)

- A 4x15 original grid, in which participants rate interpersonal and self elements along a common set of 15 factors. “My preferences”, “My beliefs” (employment outlook, certainty of exploration outcomes, external search instrumentally oriented, internal search instrumentally oriented, importance of preferred position) and three reactions (satisfaction with information, exploration stress and decision stress)
- A survey for research purposes
- 53 items
- Likert-type format response, using a 5 or 7-point scale
- Individual and/or group administration to adolescents and young adults by a psychologist
- Administration: 40 minutes

Career Repertory Grid (CVRG; Silva & Taveira, 2005): permits the assessment of self construction as well as the assessment of the structural characteristics of that system (i.e. cognitive, behavioral, affective and social dimensions)

- A 25x15 or 25x15 grid used in childhood career exploration
- Administration: 20 minutes


- Two specific assessment semi-structured activities of a professional career counselor with participant in their career trajectory and “My biography”. Adults are first asked to describe what they would like to do when they grow up (e.g., from 8 to 10, 11 to 12, 20-31, 40-51, and 51 years and older)

- Adolescent and adult career exploration is conceived as two dimensions of the same exploratory process

Based grounded by a developmental paradigm, the authors aim at career development research, focusing on the evolution of career exploration results, through childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Thus, four exploration assessment tools, that have been tested in individual studies (Md & Phd), are presented. In common, the fact that the four studies used longitudinal research designs, and achieved the importance of context and relationships in development.

Discussion and Conclusions:
- The entire theoretical endeavour of studying exploration requires an array of methods that is expansive and flexible (Blum & Blustein, 2000). According to this idea, the authors presented a diverse assessment procedure adapted to career development. The exploration, like structured and semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and narrative eliciting processes. This life-process assessment tools were already originally theory, and adapted to specific characteristics of their populations (e.g., age, language development, identity development).

- Career exploration should be studied as a complex, multimodal and multi-dimensional process (see, Blustein, 1997). Therefore, the procedures provided by the authors for its assessment cover: (a) cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of career exploration (e.g., P4); (b) the recognition of social relations influences on the career exploration, as well as the influence of culture and personal meanings in the construction of one’s self and world (e.g., P1 and P3); (c) the recognition of the history of childhood experiences, adult experiences, family, leisure, and citizenship experiences. Based on this evidence, the authors aimed to construct a short narrative about their life/career trajectory, with references to broad and less precise personal life-career events and non-events.

- In the authors’ view, one of the core outcomes of career exploration is self-construct, which refers to the process of developing a coherent and meaningful identity and shaping its place in life. All procedures place a special focus on self-construct and exploration. Considering exploration as a means of self-construct represents a particularly important shift in the conceptual framework of exploration theory and research: while individuals construct their identity as a result of exploration, self-construct generates further exploration (Blum & Blustein, 2000).

- Investigations that build on traditionally important outcome issues, such as assessing the consequences of a given level of exploration (e.g., cognitive level) are important. However, that line of investigation in more informative, investigations should provide a means of understanding how people construct and internalize their exploratory experiences. Thus, exploratory studies that examine traditional exploration tools with qualitative methods are indicated (see Flum & Blustein, 2000). In this manner, four different devices have been presented in a tentative way to accomplish this goal.

- The authors follow contemporary psychology’s interests in respect to developmental, context-rich perspectives (see Vorndran, 2001) and concerns about the means of measuring psychological processes (see Blustein & Flum, 2000), namely career exploration. It has been demonstrated that it is possible and necessary to study career exploration, and advised the use of longitudinal designs; while asking people about their exploratory experiences, encompassing the diversity of relevant life roles (e.g., P4), and also focusing on exploration outcomes (e.g., P1) over time, we can learn more about how career exploration functions in evolving and complex lives.