This article evaluates the feasibility and effectiveness of CD-ROM as a tool for resource-based, student-centered foreign language learning involving French vocabulary acquisition using applications, Directions 2000 and Pris sur le vief. The research focuses on case studies of two schools. It explores cognitive processes and alternative learning experiences which contrast with conventional delivery modes in foreign language teaching. The two most striking student and researcher perceptions of the CD-ROM facility were the way in which it gave them autonomy as learner and the promotion of “peer facilitation of learning”. The students contrasted the control of learning afforded them by the CD-ROM with a perceived passive role in the classroom which is articulated in the idea of having to listen to the teacher all the time. While the boys were markedly less communicative with each other than the girls when working in their pairs there were no gender differences in linguistic performance or student observations on collaboration. The study concludes that CD-ROM can promote vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation and independent learning and has a major contribution to make to the development of language teaching and learning.

Keywords: CD-ROM; Directions 2000; Pris sur le vief; Language learning; Collaborative learning; Autonomy; UK.